MY STORY

The Autobiography of A Hindu Widow

Mrs. Parvati Athavale

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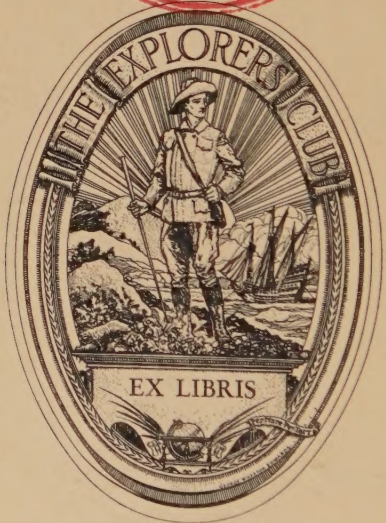

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of the Translator.

Justin E. Abbott

Summit N. J.

April 4th 1930

TOLD in a simple straightforward manner, this interesting story marks the change in attitude toward education for women in India. Mrs. Athavale, imbued with the hope of freeing her sisters from their ignorant bondage, aided Professor Karve in organizing a Home for Widows which has grown into a University for Women.

MY STORY

The Autobiography of a Hindu Widow

BY

MRS. PARVATI ATHAVALE

Written in the Marathi language

TRANSLATED BY

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"The Poet-Saints of Maharashtra Series"

WITH 16 ILLUSTRATIONS

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MY STORY
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A HINDU WIDOW

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by
Justin E. Abbott

Made in the United States of America

DEDICATION BY THE AUTHOR

To all my brothers and sisters who are earnestly working for the welfare of women, and especially of widows, I dedicate this book with my deep love.

PARVATIBAI ATHAVALE.

TRANSLATION OF THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

IN my life I have often been called upon to make public appeals for the Institution devoted to the education of widows and orphans. I have never before been asked to write a book. Yet urged by my friends and well-wishers to write my story, on the plea that by doing so it would be of help to others, I agreed. But I am not accustomed to writing, and who was there who would share with me the responsibility of such a work? Mr. Bapusaheb Chiplunkar, a life-long worker in this Institution for Widows, kindly accepted the responsibilty of helping me, and I began "My Story". Without his help this work would have been long delayed. I cannot thank him sufficiently.

I know there are faults and blemishes in this book. But the reader must remember that it is written by a woman who has not had much education, and so he must accept it with that knowledge and make the best of it.

May God give a long life to my honoured noble Guru, my brother-in-law, Professor Karve, for giving me the opportunity of serving in this Institution

for Widows, and through his efforts may there be many among the widows of this Institution who will give themselves to their country's service. With this prayer I take leave of my readers.

PARVATIBAI ATHAVALE

POONA, 1928

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THE author of this autobiography, Mrs. Parvati Athavale, or as she is known in India, Parvatibai Athavale, was born in 1870, in the little village of Devrukh, in the region known as the Konkan, south of Bombay. Her father was a man distinguished for his piety and liberality of spirit. Her mother was noted for her efficiency. Early in life Parvatibai became a widow. Her head was shaved, and she had to dress as a widow. She thus learned from experience what it is to be a Hindu widow. Some years later we find her attached to the Widows' Home, founded by Professor Karve, in a suburb of Poona, called Hingane. She came there without any education at the age of twenty-six, for, as she tells us, such a thing as a school for girls was never so much as thought of in her little home village. But Parvatibai was made of that stuff that distinguishes the Indian woman. She put her life into this Institution for Widows. No menial work was too low for her, and at the same time she had an ambition to gain knowledge and fit herself for higher service. Then the struggle for an education began. Soon a higher call came, that of being the mouth-piece for the Institution, and we now see her

as a public lecturer on the wrongs of Hindu widowhood and the need of female education. Then she felt the handicap of not knowing English. The slow process through Grammar and Dictionary did not appeal to her. She dreamed of America as the land where she could hear nothing but English and could learn it rapidly. Moreover, she would see American homes, American methods of education and learn lessons that might be useful for the women of her own land. Then came the hardships of the voyage to America for one who could not speak English, and who was a strict vegetarian, and one utterly ignorant of American ways. She came without money. She had to depend on her own efforts. But she had the courageous determination of an Indian woman. She learned to be a housemaid, gaining thus a knowledge of English by the direct method, and seeing at close range the American family life. It was not any easy life for her, however. Fate seemed against her. Her health was poor. The limit was reached when as a dish-washer in a hospital she fainted away. But in all her trials she met with kindness from Americans as well as from her own people. She was a house-maid in many homes, earning her livelihood, but with her object of coming to America unforgotten. Finally she finds herself in a family in Brooklyn, N. Y., where though still a house-maid, yet with opportunities for gaining her object. Next we hear of her as addressing gatherings of women in the Hotel Astoria,

and in distinguished Women's Clubs, pleading the cause of India's women. Finally came the good-bye, as the steamer left the dock, and her tears flowed as she remembered the kindnesses of her American and Indian friends. Then she did what others do, went down into her cabin and arranged her things. London and Paris were the next places of her triumph. The sight of her home-land filled her with joy and her strenuous, unselfish work for India's widows was again taken up, enriched by her experience abroad. She has many thoughts on female education, on Indian marriage customs and on the sufferings of Hindu widows and she frankly makes them known.

There is nothing sensational in this brief account of her life. "My Story" is very simply told, and American readers must remember that it was not written for their ears. She writes in the Marathi language, her own mother tongue, and for her own people. She did not come to America as a tourist. She came as a humble student to learn. Her observations are the answers to the questions that her Indian women friends must have asked her on her return; simple questions by simple women. But for that very reason "My Story" makes an appeal to the English reader's heart. It appealed to me in its Marathi version. Though I am personally unacquainted with Parvatibai Athavale, I remember well, in the year 1904, seeing her on the platform of a great Social Conference in Bombay. Her shaved

head and her widow's dress made a striking sight. Then in her own Marathi tongue she thrilled her audience of several thousands by her vivid descriptions and earnest appeal, answered by the heartiest of applause. I could not turn down the appeal that her book made to me, and hence this English translation for English readers.

A true translation is not one that gives merely the sense of the original. It should convey the spirit and flavour of the original as well. The English of this translation is, therefore, as near to the literal sense of the Marathi as I am able to make it, and thus preserves more or less of the flavour of the original. The Marathi lends itself easily to an English translation, but there are certain important, and many unimportant points, as in the case of idioms, where a literal translation must give way to a free translation. Yet by keeping as near to a literal translation as the English tongue will permit, the flavour of the original can be preserved. This I have tried to do.

JUSTIN E. ABBOTT.

SUMMIT, N. J.,
January, 1930.

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MY STORY

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A HINDU WIDOW

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MY STORY

CHAPTER I

MY PARENTS

I WAS born in the year 1870, in the little village of Devrukh, in the Ratnagiri District. The Ratnagiri District lies in the Southern Konkan, which is the land south of Bombay, between the sea and the range of mountains running parallel to the coast, and is about fifty miles in width. My father, Balkrishna Keshav Joshi, owned the home in which we lived. Aside from cultivating a few acres of land, he occupied himself with petty trading. Our little house was built in the style usual in the Konkan, with its thatched roof, its walls of reeds plastered with mud, a little veranda, and a small garden in front. We were altogether eleven children, of whom five are now living, three sisters and two brothers. The three sisters are Anandibai, (elsewhere called Baya) wife of Professor Karve, Yashodabai, wife of Mr. R. K. Bhide of Nasik, and myself. My brother, Vaman Balkrishna Joshi is a lawyer in the village of Devrukh. My other brother,

Narhar Balkrishna Joshi, lives at present at Bhavanagar with his son.

At the time of my birth there was no school for boys in the village of Devrukh. Of course there was none for girls. At that time no one in our village discussed such a question as female education. If we girls learned how to properly arrange for the worship of the idols, how to pound and shell the rice, how to properly remove the plates on which the family had dined, and how to bathe and care for the younger children, we were thought to have obtained all the education that was necessary for a girl.

Besides caring for us children our mother had to go and cut grass for our cattle. She had to work in the rice field. She had to shell and grind the rice. She had to draw the water from the well. In doing all this she often became very weary. At such times she was somewhat irritable, and we often came in for a scolding. She was a very efficient woman, and we children never lacked the food we needed. There were eleven children to be fed, two cows, and three or four buffalos. We had only one servant, but his duties were confined to the care of the cattle. The Reader can thus judge of the burden devolving on our mother in caring for us.

Our mother looked after all our domestic affairs. Our father attended to his petty trading and the care of his rice fields. Both were religiously inclined. The Avatar Ram was the special mani-

festation of God whom they worshipped. Although our father was engaged in petty trading yet his heart was not set on worldly affairs. He spent much of his time in repeating the names and epithets of God. When such outcasts as Mahars and Mangs came by our house, carrying on their heads burdens of rice-straw or loads of fire-wood, and were thirsty, our father, though a Brahman by caste, would give them water to drink, taken from the large earthen water-jar that held the family drinking water. He would also give them buttermilk and popped rice. The river, where these outcastes were obliged to procure their drinking water, was two miles from the village, and lest their shadow should fall on them the people of the village would not let them stand near them. So seeing their necessities our father finally placed a water-jar by our house, with the special purpose of relieving the thirst of those outcastes! When these people came into the village with their loads on their heads, they used to pause before our house, and enquire "Is Baba in the house?" And our father, even if at that time he might be engaged in worship, would leave it half finished, and even in his holy garments would take the drinking water to them. When asked how it was that when clothed in his holy garments he, a Brahman, gave water to the outcaste Mahar, he would reply, "We are all the children of God. So that if their spirits are cooled by the water, mine will be also by that act." After giving them

water, he would sometimes give them sugar, roasted and popped grains, a handful to each. He received from them fresh greens, and they conversed together on the joys and sorrows of life. Thus it happened that if any of the outcastes coming into the village, asked for water they were told, "Go to Baba's house. He will give you water." My father's giving water to these outcastes became in time a joke in the village. At the time of the Muhammadan festival, the Muharram, the processions used to pass through our village, and even to them our father gave very courteous treatment. He sometimes invited the players to come into his house, and gave them sugared water to drink. The religious mendicants, when they came to the village, never left without visiting our home. Our father would give them milk, and took great pains to show them hospitality.

Our mother was not especially pleased with our father's open hospitality, but no opposition of hers was of any avail. Our father had a very loving disposition, and he had the craze of taking to heart the needs of others, and talking with them of their joys and sorrows. Indeed much of his time was spent in the giving of water, grain, and in conversation. The real burden of the household work, therefore, fell on our mother. Besides caring for her children she had to help in the rice field at the rear of the house, and even in the petty trading of our father. Thus our mother had to work extremely

hard. She also had the anxiety regarding the future of her daughters, and how to find suitable husbands for them. From early childhood I used to think how I could relieve my mother from her anxieties, but that thought brought her very little help.

CHAPTER II

MY MARRIAGE

I OFTEN used to think, that if I were married and went to live at my husband's home, it would relieve my mother of much anxiety. At that time Hindu girls were married as early as five years of age. I was now eleven years of age. My eldest sister had been married when she was seven years of age. My other sister, Baya, had been married when nine years of age. Because I was now eleven years old, our neighbours would look at me and say, "What a big girl she is, and not yet married!"

After my brother's marriage, my father fell ill and could not take the time to hunt for a suitable family in which to give me in marriage. From childhood I possessed a strong, healthy appearance and when eleven years of age I seemed to others to be still older. So that the women who came to our house for work or otherwise would whisper to one another, "What a big girl she is and not yet a bride"! Overhearing these remarks my mother became more and more anxious.

A neighbour of ours was Mr. Bhikaji Patvardhan, a government official in the revenue department and

Mrs. Parvati Athavale (Parvatibai Athavale), author of *My Story*, and the eloquent pleader on behalf of Hindu widows before audiences of thousands.

Mrs. Anandi Karve (Baya), elder sister of Parvatibai Athavale and wife of Professor D. K. Karve whom she inspired to start the Widows' Home.

Professor D. K. Karve (pronounced Kur'vey), under whose leadership the humble Home has developed into several Departments, the last being a College for women.

The late Sir Vithaldas Thackarsey, whose donation of 1,500,000 rupees to the Widows' Home for buildings and an endowment fund gave Professor Karve the long-desired opportunity for development

belonging to a family well known and honored in the Konkan. My mother used to visit the wife of this official and help her in doing her hair, for such was the custom in the Konkan. While helping her thus, the friend used to broach the subject of my marriage. My mother would reply, "My daughter is becoming over age for marriage and the women make faces at her. But my husband has no time to hunt for a suitable match." The official's wife replied, "There is a man to whom we have given help. We have obtained work for him in the Customs Department at Goa. If you will give your daughter in marriage to him, we shall assume the expense of the marriage arrangements on both sides. You will not have to bear the burden. The only difficulty in the way is that the man is lame." After this visit, and when my father was about to begin his worship, my mother related to him the conversation with her neighbour. My father replied, "It is God Ram who has made the effort to bring the opportunity to our door. We must avail ourselves of it without fail." When he had finished his worship, he at once went to the official's house. He enquired into the ancestry and family of the young man and examined his horoscope. He definitely agreed to the marriage. I was not at all pleased with this marriage arrangement, but I said nothing. From the discussions that took place in the family I learned that the man was lame. He received only fifteen rupees a month. He had no relatives living

with him. There would be no father- or mother-in-law. Girls, eleven years of age, may perhaps feel a certain joy in the thought of the music and the glare of the wedding festival, but I felt no joy. I became anxious at the thought of marriage. I did not have the moral strength to say whether I wished or did not wish to be married. The day for the wedding was settled and my young man, obtaining six days of leave, came to Devrukh. In those days it was not customary for the bride to see the bridegroom before marriage. On the auspicious day the marriage took place. The home of our neighbour, Bhikaji Patvardhan, then became in my mind the home of my father-in-law.

After my marriage, the women who used to speak slightingly to my mother about me, now began to blame her. "What a place to put your daughter! How is it you accepted such an opportunity for her! His home has neither father-in-law nor mother-in-law for her. The husband is lame. His wages are only fifteen rupees a month. Your daughter had no physical failings that would have prevented some better opportunity; so why did you give her to him in marriage?" Hearing such talk my mother's concern for me was not lessened; it increased.

CHAPTER III

MY MARRIED LIFE

AS our neighbour Bhikaji Patvardhan's home was for all practical purposes like the home of a father- and mother-in-law, I used frequently to go there. They treated me as if I were really their daughter-in-law. When I was fourteen years of age, I was sent to Veregav near Panaji the town where my husband was employed and there we began our independent housekeeping. We were not alone in our lodgings. A very close friend of my husband's, Balaji Bhaskar Joshi, and his wife Ramabai, lived there also. Both of us women cooked at one fireplace, and dined together. We lived like sisters-in-law. We never had a quarrel. By both families living together we had less expenses and more comforts. Ramabai and I took turns in cooking and other duties, and we lived together very happily.

In my fifteenth year I had a son born, but he lived only for a day. This first experience of mine when I was but fifteen years of age, was a very difficult one, and a physician's aid was required. When I was eighteen years of age my son Narayan, who is still living, was born. He is now employed

in Professor Karve's School for Indian Women as registrar, and as Principal in one of the departments.

A year and a quarter after the birth of my son, a daughter was born, but she lived only for a day. Thus before I was twenty years of age I had given birth to three children. Soon after this my husband was sent to another post, to the village of Rai, near Bhaindar. This resulted in separating our two families and from that time my husband and I lived by ourselves.

My husband's life had been spent mostly in the climate of Goa. Having become accustomed to the dry climate of Goa the malarial air of Bassein was injurious to his health. He succumbed to Malarial fever. Growing gradually weaker, he died at my parent's home at Devrukh, when I was but twenty years of age. He had been employed at Goa from 1880 to 1890. From childhood he had a very benevolent character. He looked upon kindness to others as the true worship of God. He never tried merely to please his superiors; instead he fulfilled his duties, and often received commendation.

My husband left no property. He had no home of his own, and he had no relatives to whom I could go. Under those circumstances I began my life as a widow in my parents' home. At this time my eldest sister, daughter-in-law of Mr. Paranjpe, was a widow, and being very seriously ill came to live at our Devrukh home. My other sister, Baya, now the wife of Prof. Karve, had been a widow since

her ninth year of age, but continued to live at her mother-in-law's home. Thus with three widowed daughters our parents felt the burden of a deep sorrow. As I had no mother-in-law's home to go to, I became entirely dependent on my parents. It was not that I did not feel the sad lot of being a widow, but forgetting myself I always tried to be cheerful in their presence.

According to the age-long custom of treating the wife on the death of her husband, I had to suffer that ceremony. It was the common idea that along with the husband's corpse should go the hair and bracelets of his widow. At that time my son was three and one half years of age. Noticing my changed and odd appearance, he used to say to me, "Why are you wearing this reddish sari, and where has your hair gone?" Overcome with emotion I would reply, "My hair has gone with your father." To this he would say, "Then let us go where he is." At such times the condition of my heart was such as only those can know who are widows with children. Others cannot know it.

Putting away as much as I could the sorrows of my widowhood, I did what I could for the happiness of my parents. In this way five years of my widowhood were passed in my parental home, and I now entered on my twenty-fifth year. An event now took place that changed the whole course of my life. This was the marriage of my widowed sister, Baya, to Professor Karve.

CHAPTER IV

THE REMARRIAGE OF MY SISTER BAYA

MY elder brother, Narharpant, and Professor Karve, having finished their University course, lived together in Bombay. When my sister Anandibai (also called Baya) was twenty-two years of age, my brother had her come to Bombay to obtain an education. Professor Karve had five pupils living with him. Narharpant and Professor Karve, with their friends and relatives, made a household of about twenty-five persons. After Pandita Ramabai had returned from America, she started the Institution known as the Sharada Sadan. And in this Institution Baya was the first pupil. Baya had great love for Pandita Ramabai. And Pandita Ramabai showed great love for Baya, her first pupil in the Sharada Sadan.

My elder brother used often to go with Professor Karve to his home at Murud. And occasionally Professor Karve used to come with my brother to our home at Devrukh. Both my brother and Professor Karve were widowers. Thus my father became acquainted with Professor Karve. As both my brother and Professor Karve had attractive traits

of character, my father did not think they should remain unmarried. Once my father asked Professor Karve why he did not remarry. Professor Karve replied, "If I can find a young Brahman widow, willing to live with me in my simple manner of life, I would be willing to marry her. If I cannot find such an one I have determined to remain unmarried the rest of my life." My father replied, "If such is your determination, why not marry our Baya?" Professor Karve answered, "If your daughter is ready to marry me, I see no difficulty in the way."

Our father then went personally to Sharada Sadan in Bombay and said to Baya, "Professor Karve, a holy Brahman, is willing to marry you. If you consent to marry him, it will not be displeasing to me." Baya consented, and thus inspired by my father's desire the widow remarriage took place.

The reason why our father became favourable to the idea of widow remarriage, was as follows. When Baya became a widow at the age of nine, our father lost interest in all worldly affairs, and started on a pilgrimage to Benares. On his way he stopped at Poona. It happened that a conference had at that time been convened at Poona for the discussion of the subject of widow-remarriage. Our father was present at the conference, heard the discussion by Shastris and Pandits, and became convinced that it was right for child-widows to be remarried. For this reason our father was favourable to Baya's remarriage and gave his consent. My brother was an

educated man, and aided the plan for my sister's remarriage.

Baya was remarried at Poona. The Press informed the public that the marriage had taken place with the approval of the bride's father and elder brother. As soon as the news of this remarriage reached the village of Devrukh, our home experienced excommunication. We were boycotted by even the barber and washerman. But our father was not at all troubled by being put out of caste. He used to explain the matter to us thus: "All my daughters and sons have experienced and know the joys and sorrows of the married life. But Baya has not fully experienced the married life. She has committed no sin in remarrying, nor we in consenting to the remarriage. Let people blame me if they wish to."

The boycott lasted for a year, and we had to suffer a great deal of inconvenience. Finally our father gave a hundred rupees for the repair of the three temples in the village, fell at the feet of the citizens, and thus regaining their good will, the boycott was lifted.

CHAPTER V

MY FIRST STEPS TO AN EDUCATION

ABOUT a year and a half after the remarriage of Baya, my father and mother with myself started on a pilgrimage to Benares. On the way we halted at Poona in order to visit Baya and see her little baby Shankar. Shankar was her first child, a chubby little boy, strong and beautiful. Our father was full of delight on seeing the little boy. He took the baby on his lap and tears of joy flowed from his eyes. Said he, "How wonderful are the deeds of God Ram. It is by His grace that Baya has this beautiful jewel of a boy. It is a wicked custom to prevent child-widow remarriage, thereby depriving our country of those who might become pillars of strength to her. Ram has certainly blessed my daughter."

While we were in Poona Baya began to persuade my mother to let me remain in Poona and study under Professor Karve. Her argument was, "I am unwilling that my sister and her child should go with you to Benares, for at such places of pilgrimage there is usually the epidemic of cholera, and many a pilgrim dies. I will not let Parvati go with you on

the pilgrimage. Among my sisters she alone has a grown-up boy."

Our mother belonged entirely to the old way of thinking. She had not approved of Baya's remarriage. Moreover, she had this fear that one of her widowed daughters having remarried, the others might follow her example. Her reply to Baya was, "If Parvati should follow your example, it will mean a stain on our family. Rather than that, it would be better for her to go on the pilgrimage and die of cholera. We are going to take her with us!"

This discussion sometimes extended to midnight, and took place every day. No one, however, asked me what I wished in the matter under discussion. And because of my mother's strong feelings I felt unable to tell her my real wish in the matter. My mother said to me, "Either go back to Devrukh, or come along with us to Benares. If you stay here with Baya, I shall commit suicide." And to Baya she said, "If you really want us to go to Benares then see that Parvati is sent back to Devrukh."

Finally Baya agreed to send me back to Devrukh, and helped our father and mother start for Benares. After their departure Baya began to persuade me to remain with her and go to school. But in the presence of my mother I had taken an oath that I would go back to Devrukh and not remain with Baya. So I succeeded in changing Baya's mind and, finding someone to go with me, I went back to Devrukh, taking my son with me.

When my mother and father returned from Benares and met me in Devrukh they were filled with joy. At that time, my son Nana, was seven years old. My husband's brother was living at Miraj. I asked him to come to Devrukh and perform the religious ceremony of investing my son with the sacred thread, which he did. He was employed on eight rupees a month in the Customs Department. I had lived five years at my mother's, but I was becoming dissatisfied to remain there longer. So gaining the consent of my husband's brother, I decided to go back with him to Miraj, and we three started on our way. I had another reason for wanting to go to Miraj, which was that my son would have a better opportunity for an education. On arriving there we hired a small room and lived as luxuriously as our poverty permitted. My son, Nana, went to school. After about two months Professor Karve and Baya came on some private business to Miraj. They urged me to come to Poona, that my son might have better advantages for his education. I also at that time, like my mother, held the old orthodox views, so that at first I was not quite willing to go and live with those known as Social Reformers. But because it would help the education of my son, I decided to accept any condition of living. I sent my son with Baya to Poona, but I remained with my husband's brother.

Five or six months after this I went to Poona to see my son. At that time the thought of start-

ing a home for widows and orphan girls was revolving in Professor Karve's mind. One day he called me to him, and explained to me his thoughts on the matter. He said to me, "If I start a Home for Widows, what work would you be willing to do in connection with it?" At that time I had not the remotest idea of what education meant. I did not even know what the meaning of the word ashram (Home) was. I replied, "If you start the Home I will accept the position of cook. I do not think I know how to do anything else." Professor Karve replied, "There will be considerable delay before the Widows' Home gets started. So in the meantime obtain a teacher's certificate. To obtain this attend the Home Class from tomorrow."

I had no idea what "Home" meant or "Class". Baya had to explain to me in Marathi the meaning of those English words. Thus an ignorant woman, in my twenty-sixth year, I began to attend the Home Class in the building near the temple of Gavatya Maruti.

This Home Class was attended by a considerable number of the wives of the wealthy citizens of Poona. I was a shaven widow from the Konkan, and my clothes were none of the best. Such being my condition the teacher did not give as much attention to me as she did to the rich ladies. I wearied of that treatment and began to remain at home. I said to Baya that I preferred to occupy myself with the household cooking, and thus help

my son in his education. But Baya would not assign any work to me. She punished me by making me sit doing nothing. But I wearied of doing nothing, and pleaded with Baya to free me from this prison-like life. Baya replied, "You must either sit in the house doing nothing or go to school and learn. We did not bring you here from Miraj to do housework. We can get as many women to do our cooking as we want. If you want to become a teacher, instead of sitting idly near the fireplace, you must spend your time in the school."

By this time I no longer liked the punishment of sitting still and doing nothing. It now happened that the wife of the late Professor Agarkar had a teacher from the Home Class come to her home to teach her. Mrs. Agarkar was as ignorant as I was. So I began to go to her house to study along with her. I there learned the alphabet, read the First Book, learned the multiplication table up to ten times fourteen, and to count up to one hundred. Then I began to think to myself that if I must study, I might as well study so as to make it worth while. There is no use in merely half learning. But if I go to school people laugh at me. If I stay at home my sister punishes me by making me sit still and do nothing. By this time I began to feel that it was not quite right to put the burden of the education of my son on my sister. Thus for many days there was a struggle in my heart. Finally after much thought I decided to enroll my name in the school

held in the Hujurpag, the horse stables of the old Maratha kings, and approved of the idea of entering the boarding school connected with it. I made my decision known to Professor Karve, and I saw he heartily approved of it. At that time widows with heads shaven, and the other signs of widowhood, were not accustomed to go to school. So although everything was settled, I began to be very anxious as to the result of my venture. All I knew was the multiplication table up to fourteen, counting up to one hundred, and how to read such simple words as "do", "house" and "cart". I could not read the Modi alphabet of the current hand. I was now twenty-six years of age, and my son seven. How was I to get an education at my age! When, indeed, would I become qualified to become a teacher! How was I to become able to meet the expenses of my son's education! Such were the anxieties that, unthought of before, now stood before my sight. But Baya aroused my courage, and took me to the school in the Hujurpag. The teacher of the second division was a Mr. Gomate. My sister took me to him and requested him to take me into his class. The teacher replied, "She does not know properly the requirements of the first division. How can she come into this second division?" The girls in the class now began to look at me with curious glances. Girls who are now in school can have no idea of how I felt in that uncomfortable position. Baya finally prevailed with the teacher by her arguments

in my behalf, and I was enrolled in the second division.

The yearly examination was now near. In my class there were quite a number of unmarried girls of eight or ten years of age. By special friendliness I was able to get their help in learning the multiplication table and the compound letters. Altogether there were sixty girls in the Second Division. I was the only one among them with the marks of widowhood, my shaven head, my widow's sari, and the absence of ornaments. Yet with all these difficulties I was able by hard work to pass the examination. From then on I had an easier time with my studies, and passed every examination as it came along. Finally I received a scholarship for entrance into the Teacher's Training Class, and in the third year I received a Teacher's Certificate of the highest grade. The pleasure that my success gave Professor Karve, and the satisfaction felt by Baya, are beyond my powers to describe.

While I was obtaining my education Professor Karve's plans for a Widows' Home were being realized. He had begun the Institution at Hingane, a suburb of Poona, with eighteen girls. Professor Karve was anxiously waiting for me to finish my examinations and come to Hingane. Having passed my examinations, steps were taken to free me from the bond given to the Government, so that I might teach in the Hingane school. Professor Silby was at the head of the Educational Department at that

time, and I hear that he helped Professor Karve in obtaining the freedom I desired. The Government authorities gave me permission to teach in the Widows' Home without having to teach for three years in a Government School, and without any other hindrance. While completing my studies in the Teacher's Training School I had frequently, on Saturdays, gone to Hingane for short visits. We used to call Professor Karve, *Anna*, a word indicating great respect, and I often had the opportunity of walking with him from Poona to Hingane. There was no made road to Hingane. We often had to walk through the fields along the little irrigating channels. While walking there *Anna* would spend the time talking with me. The subject of conversation that came uppermost was the condition of widows in India, and what means should be adopted for their relief. Thus I heard from him his settled opinions on these subjects. I was much instructed thereby, and my mind was prepared for the work in the Widows' Home. I think that the credit for my decision to give my life to the Home belongs to these talks with my honored Guru, Professor Karve.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHANGE IN MY OPINIONS

I HAD a gradual change of thought during the period covering my coming to Poona and my entering on the work for the Widows' Home. While I was in my Konkan home at Devrukh, I had no conception of what education meant. How far from my thoughts was that of service for my country! Like many another widow I would have blamed Fate for my condition, and continued to live the rest of my life in my Devrukh home. Like them I would have spent my life in religious worship and going on pilgrimages. But it was Baya's remarriage that gave me the opportunity to come to Poona to live there and gain an education. It was the education I received that made questions revolve in my mind, as to the real meaning of "the country of India, her national life and what is needed to be done for the national uplift."

While thinking of these questions, I naturally began to think how sad the condition of the Hindu widow was, and how her condition could be improved. These thoughts entirely changed my former thinking, and started others in my mind as to the

duty of widows, and how they should live from the religious point of view. I became especially interested in the question of the shaving of the widow's head.

When at Devrukh I thought of this shaving off of hair as a religious rite, and that it was my religious duty to continue that practice. Even when I began to teach in the Widows' Home at Hingane and saw a widow give up her marks of widowhood, I thought she had committed a great sin. But as I thought further, I began to see that the compulsory shaving of a widow's head was not right. I thought, however, that a voluntary shaving off of her hair, as an initiatory rite into the order of those who give up their worldly life, was a rightful religious act. I also began gradually to realize that unless widows themselves protested against the compulsory shaving off of their hair, the question would not be settled. I came to this opinion very gradually. Just as after a child is born, its field of knowledge grows in extent, so my education gave me as it were a new birth, and a wider field of knowledge. Indeed, this new birth gave me so wide a field of knowledge that my opinions changed very rapidly. While my opinions thus rapidly changed, not all my opinions corresponded with those of the "Social Reformers". In regard to certain customs I felt that the old fashioned ways of living, and the old traditions were the best for us. In later pages I intend to give my opinions on social questions, from which the reader

will see that I cling to many of the old ways and customs as desirable.

By having Professor Karve's example always before me, I began to feel a special calling which, however, was not on the lines of the Reformers' doctrines of independence and equality. I began to think how I could serve my motherland. I decided that the service I could render my motherland was service to her daughters, who had the misfortune to become widows, and to bring into their lives the rays of hope. I determined to work for the betterment of my motherland by my efforts for her widows.

As Anna (Professor Karve) and I frequently walked together on the path to Hingane, and conversed on these subjects, my opinions became firmly fixed. I was, however, feeling the responsibility of caring for my own son, and I was wondering how I would be able to assume responsibility for others. But I determined that while I had to think of my own necessities, I would make it possible to accomplish my higher spiritual duties.

When Baya was remarried I was as pleased as my father was. But when people began to ask me what I was going to do, I thought it strange. People used to remark that as I continued to live at Anna's house, I should probably soon follow Baya's example. But on that question I had no change of opinion. Anna's ideals and his simple manner of living affected me differently from what one would

expect. Instead of being of use to one family only, I determined to spend my life in service for widows. And having once for all settled this question, I started on the path of its fulfillment. I felt that a widow who had one or two children, and who had some actual experience of the happiness of domestic life, if she were able to do some work of importance would not be tempted to enter again into the duties of a married life. In accordance with this idea, I settled on my ideal of life.

Education awakened my mind. I determined on carrying out my ideal. And for this purpose I decided to give my whole life to the service of the Widows' Home. To help Professor Karve in his work I went to Hingane to live, and set myself directly to work.

CHAPTER VII

MY WORK AT THE WIDOWS' HOME BEGINS

IF anyone had told me at that time that I, who was ready to act even as a cook in that Home, would later spend my whole life in a larger form of service, I should not have believed them. But life sometimes contains experiences previously totally unthought of. It was really Baya's remarriage that gave my life its special turn. Many people, and even my mother, were wondering what I would do. I am now going to give in brief to my readers an account of the service which, through the inspiration given me by Professor Karve, I have been able to render the widows of the Home.

There is a very great difference between the Widows' Home as it was in 1902, and as it is now in 1928. The building for the Home in 1902 consisted merely of a hut. It was divided into three rooms. One room was for the kitchen, one for studying and the third for sleeping. In this third room by a special arrangement of a curtain a place was set apart where Professor Karve could spread his bedding and sleep. Water had to be brought from the canal. When I went to the Home there

were in it eighteen young widows. Professor Karve and another teacher instructed the girls. Baya remained in the house at Poona. From the very beginning, and continuing for a year, I had the experience of a variety of duties, from that of the hired woman to that of Lady Superintendent. In 1905–1906, a veranda was added as a dining room. Soon after that, Shri Kashi Bai Devdhar, Shri Venubai Namjoshi and Shri Banubai Deshpande joined the Institution for a life service. Through their coming the burden of responsibility which I carried was lightened. And because of the growth of the Home and its needs, I was assigned to the duty of collecting funds. I had no idea at first that such work would be given to me, or that I could undertake it. But it happened one day that Professor Karve, while riding in an ox-cart from Poona over a rough road, was overturned, and was considerably hurt. We had to carry him into the Home and apply the necessary remedies. I went into the room where he was lying and, in order to consult him, sat down by his side. The thought had come into my mind that supposing at some future time another such accident should happen, it might be very serious and the Institution might suffer widowhood. If such an event took place who, then, would care for us?

Thus far it was Professor Karve who had collected funds and had to endure all the hardships of travelling to many distant places. So my thought

was to lessen, if possible, the troubles he had to endure in this part of his work. It was then April and it was necessary that as soon as Professor Karve sufficiently recovered, he should start on his campaign of raising funds. Now was the time to show what I could do.

One of the girls going home on her vacation had obtained a railway pass to Khandva. The pass allowed the girl to take a servant with her as far as Khandva. I decided to take advantage of this permission. I had had no experience in raising funds, and I had no assurance that I should at first succeed in my attempt. So in order that the Institution might not bear the expense of a journey that might be profitless, I begged the girl who was going to Khandva to take me along as her servant. I just then learned that Professor Karve felt sufficiently recovered to start on his fund-raising campaign and was about to do so. I, therefore, immediately acquainted him with my plan. He approved of it and gave me permission to go. It was with great joy that I decided to go. But that very day my son, Nana, was attacked with fever with a temperature of 104 degrees. When night came he was in delirium. The train left in the morning and because I must take it, if I were to go, I was in great perplexity. At this juncture I put the question to Anna whether I should go. He replied, "If you go, Venubai and Kashibai will take the same care of your son as you yourself would take."

Without giving the question any further special thought, I gave my boy into the charge of Venubai and Kashibai, obtained a servant's pass, and started for Khandva. The above will show how in carrying on my work for the Home, if the occasion arrived, my associates in the work were always willing to take charge of my boy, Nana, as if he were their own child.

On arriving at Khandva, I expected to call on the leading citizens and ask them to call a meeting, and that I would explain the details of the Home and ask for contributions. But no one paid any attention to me. Some scoffed at me and said, "What are you going to do? Give a lecture?"

I then understood that many felt a hesitancy about listening to a lecture by me, because I was a widow. Finally, however, I heard of a landowner and went to call on him. He listened to my story and told me that every evening a company of his friends gathered at his house to eat *pan supari* and have a jolly time. "Come at that hour and give us a lecture. You will accomplish your purpose."

I agreed and went to his house at the hour named. His company was there, about ten or twelve friends, having a "jolly time", as he said. The landowner asked me to begin my talk. I began it. I thought they would turn their batteries on me but they did not, and I went on talking until I finished what I had to say. After my talk I placed before them a subscription paper, and their donations amounted

Where the Widows' Home first began in 1896, with Parvatibai as cook and maid of all work, in a three-room hut, and with eighteen widows.

The Widows' Home in 1908. Parvatibai Athavale had no small share in the growth of the Institution. She has travelled all over the Maratha country pleading for the needed funds.

The buildings of the Women's College in the city of Poona. Where land is cheap twenty-four acres were bought at a cost of about $12,000.

This main building of the College for Women was erected in 1922 and marks the changing opinion of India towards education for women

to thirteen rupees. As I had no expectation of receiving that amount, I felt as if I had received one hundred and thirteen.

From Khandva I took a letter of introduction, and going to the Native State of Indore, called on one of the high officials. In accordance with the character of such State officials they would tell me to go to such and such; tomorrow they would tell me to go to some other, and that they would help my undertaking. I called on these several individuals but no one was willing to call a meeting, and I seemed unable to make even a beginning of my errand. Finally, I decided to appeal to the students attending the Indore College. Shri Garud and Shri Dev became very active in my behalf and arranged for a gathering in the Prarthana Samaj. I gave my lecture, the students gave their assistance and collected one hundred rupees for the Widows' Home.

Encouraged by my experience at Indore, I took a letter of introduction from there and went to Dev. I called on the chief official. Under the chairmanship of one of the Professors, I gave my lecture. There was a good attendance at the gathering and after the lecture I received four hundred rupees for the Home. Thus having started from Poona on a servant's ticket, and then having travelled all alone to distant places, and finally having brought back five hundred rupees for the Home, my success gave Professor Karve great joy. From that day the

duty of making the Home known fell upon me. I had had no idea that such a duty would ever come to me, but by unexpected circumstances it came to me as my share in the development of the Widows' Home.

CHAPTER VIII

EXPERIENCES IN COLLECTING SUBSCRIPTIONS

FROM the year 1904 until now, 1928, I have been collecting subscriptions for the Widows' Home. Aside from three years spent in America, a three years' furlough to study English, and a year of work as Lady Supervisor in a girls' school in Bombay, a total of seven years, the balance of twenty years have been devoted entirely to collecting funds for the Home. To the North I have been to Saugar, Hushangabad, Delhi, Agra, Lacknow and Conpur. To the South I have visited Ranibenur, Mangalore and I have been even as far South as Rameshvar; to the West Ahmedabad, Nadiyad, Dholaka, Dhunghuka and Bhavnagar. Every year I have collected about three or four thousand rupees, and I estimate that altogether I have collected for the Widows' Home sixty or seventy thousand rupees.

I have delivered many addresses to lay before the public the sad state of Hindu widows. I close my addresses by describing what the Home does for widows, and making an appeal for help. When I speak in that part of India, where the Marathi lan-

guage is not known, I engage the services of an interpreter. I give my lectures sometimes to students in schools and colleges, sometimes to girls and boys in the primary schools, and to gatherings of women only. My custom is to begin with some useful topic. To the women I speak of "The Law of Regularity" or "Woman's Duties". Near the close I tell of the Home and ask for funds to support it.

While doing this work I have had to suffer many difficulties. As a consequence I gradually gained courage to face audiences. If anyone had said to me, when I was a young girl, that I would end in giving lectures, I should never have believed them. I accomplished this, however, by habituating myself to public speaking. Although I am not an orator, nor a learned woman, still I have been able to awaken public interest in widows through my lectures. In 1904 there was convened in Bombay a Conference on Social Reform. I was asked to speak on one of the resolutions. The President of the Conference was the late Sir Narayan Chandavarkar. In this address I advocated that the women should not blindly follow the fashions of the West; that women who were poor should dress very simply, and take pains that their clothes did not indicate frivolity. It was evident that on the whole the audience was pleased with what I said. It was distasteful only to those reformers who merely talk reform. While I was talking the enthusiasm of the audience so in-

creased that young men took off their caps and went around collecting money, resulting in a considerable sum. The next day I returned to Poona, and started for Jamkhandi to obtain subscriptions in the Native State. While I was gone a deputation of distinguished ladies called on Professor Karve, and advised him that I should be removed from the work of collecting funds. Professor Karve told the deputation that he would consider the matter and they retired. For some days also there was considerable correspondence between Professor Karve and certain Reformers. From some points of view I was a Social Reformer then, and still am. The fact that I left my home at Devrukh and gave my life's service to the Home is evidence that my own life has greatly reformed. The purpose in my address at Bombay was merely that Reformers should not needlessly give opportunity for unfavourable comment on their own lives. I still think the same. I found, however, that the affect of my speech in Bombay was helpful to my work, and I was spoken of as "The lady who addressed the Social Reform Conference". [1]

[1] The translator was present on that occasion and can bear witness to the eloquent appeal of Parvatibai and the enthusiasm it aroused.

CHAPTER IX

DIFFICULTIES IN TRAVELLING

IN my travels through the different Districts and Counties I very naturally learned the public opinion regarding educated Indian women. It was with very great hesitation that people of even high rank would admit into their household a female teacher or a nurse, for even a short time. In carrying on my work of collecting money I had occasion to remain in the house of an official in a town near Dharwad. I soon learned the point of view of the official and his wife towards female teachers and nurses. Their idea of a female teacher was that she cared more for dress than work, and that she had a dislike for any ordinary work. She was thought to be looking forward to her pension, and in the meantime spent most of her time gossiping with the women of the house. It was night time when I arrived at their home and they gave me a room in the house, but on the next day they put me in a separate house near them, so that I might live by myself. They treated me as if I were a queen, and would not let me help in any of the household duties. But I wearied of such a life, and by putting my hand

to the commonest duties I showed them that I wanted the official's wife to treat me as if I were her sister, and that I was ready for any kind of household service. After watching me the official said to me, "You have passed your examination. I see a great difference between you and other female teachers". Having thus gained his commendation, I have had occasion to visit his home frequently, and he has in many ways assisted me in my work of collecting funds.

In whatever town I went I had at first great difficulty in getting an audience. To listen to a lecture by a widow was not considered respectable. When going from one town to another I was accustomed to carry a letter of recommendation, but on one occasion I did not have such a letter with me and yet had to visit a town where I was unacquainted with a single individual. I found it a very difficult task to go from house to house and make myself known. At the same time it seemed to me an improper thing to ask a mere acquaintance to introduce me to others. And how was I to know who belonged to the higher circles in the town?

Finally, I settled on the following method for accomplishing my purpose. The Postmaster of the town was a Muhammadan gentleman. I obtained from him the names of eight people of high rank in the town, and at his suggestion the postman on his rounds pointed out to me the houses of those whose names were given to me. He seemed very pleased

to give me this information. This enabled me to meet a gentleman sympathetic towards the Widows' Home at Poona, and he assented to gathering an audience, which he did, and I collected there a considerable sum of money.

In my various journeys I saw for myself the condition of widows in those cities that are considered sacred. Indeed I went for that purpose to Gokarna, Mahabaleshvar and Udupi. Having accomplished my purpose in collecting funds, I devoted the remainder of the time to an investigation of the condition of widows in those places. People in Poona and Bombay think that because schools are open to girls, the condition of widows must have been improved. But this is not so. Schools for girls exist in larger cities, but elsewhere only ignorance is to be found.

At Udupi, where the Math (Religious House) of Madhva Swami is located, widows spend their time idly from morn until night. In that town a widow is shaven even though she may be a mere child. Widows are not allowed to eat the evening meal. Their clothes are hardly sufficient to cover themselves. The widows there have to expose their bald, shaven heads, as do the mendicants, when they go on the street. The expectation of the people there is that these widows will join some religious order and thus bring about their spiritual welfare. But it is a question what good comes to them by it. In that town it is the custom for all the widows to

assemble in the Temple of Shri Krishna at the evening praise service. After the service a favour is distributed amongst them consisting of sugar, parched rice and the like, a small handful to each, which they eat in the temple precincts, and most of them sleep there. At night religious mendicants also lodge in the temple precincts. There should be separate arrangements for widows in these temples, but such is not the case.

In connection with the temples in Malabar, there is free distribution of food, and this induces widows and mendicants to come from distant places. Their food costs them nothing and they spend their time in idleness. Their minds conform to the English saying, "An empty mind is the devil's workshop". The condition of widows who wander from sacred place to sacred place with a religious purpose is one that excites pity. They have neither worldly riches nor spiritual riches. Just as Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Andrews and the Honorable Mr. Shastri have laboured in Africa for securing the freedom of Indians from slavery, so our Reformers must awaken to the task of freeing widows from a slavery that exists in the sacred places of India under the guise of securing for them spiritual riches. It is not sufficient to hold conferences and pass resolutions. The necessity is urgent for the opening of homes of refuge for widows living in those sacred places.

CHAPTER X

I DISCARD SIGNS OF WIDOWHOOD

FROM the time that I gave my service for life to the Home devoted to unprotected women and girls, most of my time has been spent in collecting funds for this institution. I did not, therefore, remain in one place, teaching in the school, but being assigned the duty of collecting funds I have had to visit many places in the discharge of the work required of me. I have, therefore, been enabled to learn from actual personal investigation the condition of widows and the difficulties under which they labour. I, being a widow myself, could appreciate fully their circumstances. So that I now began to feel it my duty to bring the condition of widows before the public in some special way and bring about some betterment in their lot.

Among the many difficulties experienced by widows one of the greatest is that of the rites that compel them to the renunciation of all worldly things. As I was subjected to those rites I had a personal experience of them. And I have had to make journeys from place to place as one who had

been subjected to those rites, with my shaven head and widow's garb. This has enabled me to understand the many inconveniences that widows have to endure. I have a full personal experience of the degradation connected with customs to which widows are subjected. So from the time that I began to have some understanding on the subject, and had given my life's service to the Widows' Home in Poona, my opinion was formed that these unfortunate customs should be stopped, and that the shaving of the widows' heads should no longer be continued. I had certain examples of this in the case of some Reformed parents who would not allow their daughters' hair to be shaven off. The agitation of the Reformers has had some good results, it must be confessed.

My opinion, therefore, took shape as follows, that the thousands of widows who, in their years of ignorance or who against their wish, have had their heads shaven, should, when they have reached the age of discretion, no longer subject their heads every fortnight to the barber's razor, but let their hair grow, and take their place in human relationships as they did before their widowhood.

As I continued to work for the Institution at Poona, I was constantly thinking of the problem of the Hindu widow, and my opinion now definitely formed itself that in the matter of head-shaving, instead of submitting to that compulsory rite, widows should assert their right to their own heads,

and refuse to subject them to the barber. Widows who thus asserted their right would at first be criticized, but if this determination could be adopted it would prevent the sufferings of head-shaven widows, and enable them to adopt ways of living which they themselves feel to be right. Up to the year 1912 I worked at the Poona Home for Widows with my head shaven. After that date I allowed my hair to grow and made a change from a widow's garb by my own free choice, but I was very seriously criticized for doing so.

With the exception of Poona, Bombay and a few other cities the custom of shaving off the widows' hair continues, however, as before. The difficulties which they experience in that regard, and what they themselves feel in reference to it I am going to put before my readers. May they think of the custom with independent minds and labour to free the Hindu community of this evil.

Because of my travels I was able to speak personally with many widows and their relatives on the subject of the shaving off of the hair, and what they told me of the difficulties they met because of the custom, corresponded exactly with my own experience.

The shaving of a widow's head may have originally been a religious rite, the same as that prescribed for a *sannyasi* who renounces all worldly possessions. But if a *sannyasi* thus shaven no longer lives according to the rules of the religious order

and engages in worldly affairs and lives a worldly life, he commits a wrong. And if violating all the rules of his order, he depends on the outward sign of the shaven head, he is deemed a hypocrite and loses all influence for good over others, and it brings no good to himself. The same rule applies to the pitiable condition of the Hindu widow. The religious rite is purely one of outward form. Not three or four in a thousand who submit to this rite are worthy of the religious order to which it is theoretically supposed to admit them. Such being the fact, it has been and still is being imposed on helpless, ignorant and wholly dependent widows. I am not entirely opposed to the shaving of a widow's head. I think that if a widow really renounces all worldly living of her own accord, and wishes to devote herself, as Ramdas did, to her country, and to social welfare, she may if she so desires accept the condition of the Buddhist nuns, remaining in a religious house, observing its rules, and adopting the sign of a shaven head.

But the condition of head-shaven Hindu widows is entirely different from the above. Widows with shaven heads and widows not shaven reside generally in their respective families and near their other relatives. They see the happy lives of youth around them. What must be the state of a child-widow's mind as she sees about her what she cannot enjoy. No one can understand it who has not become a widow in her youth. The condition of widows has

changed in the last thirty years, say the people of Poona and Bombay, but in the towns and villages thousands of shaven widows can be seen, and many of them are of tender age. To remove this evil it is not enough to hold occasional Social Conferences in the large cities.

Just as a man of his own free will may renounce all worldly living and adopt the sign of a shaven head, entering into the religious order in the presence of others, so if a widow wishes to submit to a similar rite, and before the world enter into some religious order, I think she should be free to do so. At present this rite is administered in private without any religious ceremony being connected with it.

Twenty years of my life were spent with a shaven head. I then made up my mind that so far as I was concerned the custom should come to an end. No one advised me in this decision. Professor Karve had left the question entirely to my own choice. I had no urging from him, nor any encouragement in this matter. His opinion was that each one must settle the question for herself.

While engaged in the work for the Widows' Home I made thousands of attempts to bring about the cessation of the custom of widows having their heads shaved. In my speeches I pleaded that at least the shaving, if it must be done, should not be done by barbers, but by some member of the family like a brother or son. Those widows who look on

the rite of having their hair shaved off as a religious act, if their caste does not come to their aid in demanding that a brother or son should do the shaving, then they should be independent enough to refuse to be shaved by barbers. To aid my attempts I even procured some safety razors for them to use. But I soon realized that it was the widows' belief that being shaven by barbers was the scriptural way, and to be shaven otherwise was a wrong act.

I have had many conversations with widows and I still continue to have them. Their reply in substance is, "Who knows who was the damn author of the custom of shaving widows' heads. It is not even mentioned in the Ramayan or Mahabharat. We do not know whether the custom existed in the Vedic period. We learn from men that it is found in the Laws of Manu. But no one seems to consider that those laws are suitable for the present time."

The barbers are always quite ready for the fortnightly shaving of young widows. But when the widows are over fifty or sixty years of age it is not easy to get barbers to do that work even in such cities as Bombay. If asked by such a widow in the early morning, his reply is, "I don't do such work here by the Bhavani shrine. I will come to your house at noon if you wish." In the villages the widows have great difficulty in securing barbers to shave them, and they have often to be called from a distance. Under such circumstances, widows sometimes have hair several inches long, falling over their

eyes and making it possible for relatives to tease them.

"Grandmother! Why is your hair so short? When are you going to braid it? Why do you cover your head with your sari?"

I think that if society intends to continue the custom of shaving widows' heads, relatives should be willing to suffer some inconvenience and learn the art of shaving and not leave it to barbers. It is a matter of interest that recently there have been held conferences of barbers in which resolutions have been passed that no barber should shave a widow's head. It would be of advantage, therefore, if those who have some authority in this matter should learn to shave their widows and not employ barbers. Men are not now ashamed to shave themselves, and I cannot understand why, if their widows must be shaven, they must be shaved by barbers. But I suppose these so-called Social Reformers have so much to do for their country that they have no time for even a word or two of sympathy with their aged sisters, and if they haven't time for that, they can hardly be expected to find time to shave them.

I feel that Social Reformers should at least stop the shaving of the heads of elderly women, and not condemn them to an outer religious rite to which their minds do not respond. If they have not the time to devote themselves for the relief of widows, nor the moral courage to do so, they might at

least bring the custom to an end by making it depend on the choice of the widows themselves.

Knowing that unless I set the example I could not expect widows to take a stand against the custom, I paid no attention to the slanders, suspicions and insults that met me in 1912, and continued on the path of my purpose. Some said of me, "Until forty years of age she remained with her head shaven, doing work in the Widows' Home, and appearing thus in society, and now she has begun to let her hair grow. Her shaven head did not hinder her work. If she is now letting her hair grow she must have some hidden motive."

At that time there were people of intelligence who had the same kind of thoughts about me. I have heard some of the questions they put to Professor Karve. "Say, Mr. Karve, is it true that Parvatibai has some hidden purpose in letting her hair grow?" Professor Karve replied, "I do not think she has. If she has it will later come to light."

Some people may even now say that if I had the intention to speak against the custom why did I not do so, and set the example before I took up work in the Widows' Home. There were two reasons for this. The first reason is that if I had allowed my hair to grow when I first came to the Home, there would have been needless misunderstandings about me, and I would not have been able to do for the Home what I have succeeded in doing. I had to put aside my thoughts on this custom in

order not to hinder the work for the Home. Another reason was that when I began to work in the Widows' Home my son was a small child. Although he attended school, still he had not arrived at the thinking age, and until he had I did not wish his tender mind to be badly affected by seeing the change in my appearance nor listening to the insults people passed on me. I did not want him to think that his mother had committed an irreligious act. So I waited until he came to years of discretion and could think for himself. And then I did what I had long intended to do.

When I lived in the Konkan I became a widow. According to the custom of that part of the country I was shaven and dressed in a widow's garb. But it is needless to say that I was not responsible for those acts.

It is true that the opinions of people in recent times regarding the shaving of widows' heads are undergoing a change, but in the villages it is changing very slowly. Unless widows themselves take the lead against the unjust custom, which under the name of religion sorely presses upon them, it is going to be very difficult for the Hindu community to be rid of it.

CHAPTER XI

THE MARRIAGE OF MY SON NANA

IT is my opinion that parents should very thoughtfully perform their duty in connection with the education and the marriage of their children. Since much of my time had to be devoted at first to studying, I had committed the responsibility of Nana's education to my sister Baya and Professor Karve. At the same time I kept an eye on the instruction being given him, and did what I could to mold his character.

It was through my association with Professor Karve that I came to possess the wish to devote all my life to the service of widows, and in order that my son might have in him the seed of the same desire, I placed him from his early years in the same good company. I received no salary for my work in the Widows' Home. I received my board and every month two and a half rupees as pocket money. And for some years I received from the funds of the Home eight rupees a month for the education of my son. That was all I was able to do for his instruction. The completion of his schooling, including his graduation from College and receiving

his B.A. degree, was due to the kind help of my brother-in-law, my younger sister Kashibai and her husband Mr. Bhide. He gained his M.A. at the Furgusson College, Poona. At the age of twenty-two Nana decided to devote his life to the education of widows. At that time Nana had not completed his course at college. I learned of his decision on returning from one of my journeys, and it was a great joy to me that it was in my absence, and of his own free choice, that he had decided on a course which I had wished for him.

I now felt it my duty to arrange for my son's marriage. I had noticed that many parents were not sufficiently careful in the choice they made for their children. I was, therefore, entirely opposed to giving Nana in marriage to some girl with whom I was not properly acquainted. I felt that she ought to have completed her matriculation examination. She should know well her domestic duties. She should be one accustomed to living and working in the higher class of families. In short it was my intention to give Nana in marriage to some girl whom her parents had wisely trained. While thinking how I was to find such a girl, and how to make sure of her fitness, I was reminded of the very dear friends I had made when living at Goa, Mr. Balaji Bhaskar Joshi, and his wife Ramabai. When we were living in Goa he and his wife had remarked in fun that if they should have a daughter they would like to have her given in marriage to my Nana.

My husband had in the same spirit accepted the proposal.

It was in 1888 that I was living in Goa. Later I began my connection with the Poona Home for widows. In 1903 Mr. Joshi was employed in the Customs Department at Harne. On inquiry, I found it was his purpose to give his daughter a good education previous to giving her in marriage. When I learned this I determined to give the girl the hoped for education, and then if she was acceptable to Nana, to have them married. I, therefore, wrote a letter to Mr. Joshi suggesting my plan which he heartily approved, and he sent his daughter to our school at Hingane. I was careful to let no one know my intentions, for I did not wish to encourage the gossip that would have taken place, if it had become known.

I was, therefore, able to see for myself the daily conduct of Mr. Joshi's daughter, and know her character, and having decided in my own mind that she was in every way fitted for Nana, I waited until she was in the Sixth English Standard, and then I broached the subject to Nana for his opinion. Mr. Joshi's daughter was of a quiet, gentle disposition and with an attractive face. Nana had been approached by others who suggested girls of more beauty than Mr. Joshi's daughter. Youths look to the outer appearance, and give a higher mark to beauty of face than they do to other qualifications. So when I first suggested to Nana marriage with

Mr. Joshi's daughter, he rejected the idea. But feeling that he had not given due weight to every reason in her favour I continued to do what I could to change his mind. To my way of thinking she had been brought up in the simple ways of her parents. They had taught her habits of simplicity and economy. Although of a quiet disposition she had the ability to mix with and interest people of our class. She was very industrious. This was not imaginary on my part, for I had ocular demonstration of her character. I had not noticed this special qualification in other girls. So using many means of influencing Nana, I finally turned his mind in her favour, and I convinced him that he would have a happier domestic life if he married the one whom I approved. As soon as his approval was gained, an auspicious day was chosen and the marriage took place. This was in the year 1915. At that time my son was 27 years of age and her age was 21. What Mr. Joshi and his wife and I had arranged in fun, had now become true, and it is needless to say that we were all very happy over the marriage.

There is an opinion that is spreading that when our young men and women are of age that they should be left to choose their partners for life, and that their guardians should not impose their wishes on them. But this is quite contrary to my opinion. Our young men and women have less experience of life than those older. On account of their youth

they are more easily under the influence of passion. It requires experience and thought to determine what is right and what is wrong. In the matter of marriage, therefore, guardians must help the young and impress upon them the right and wrong of their actions. Of course, one must present the subject in a way to incline their minds to the right view. I do not think the modern young man or woman will listen to their guardians if they attempt to use force or threats. I do not say that the opinions of the young should not be listened to. They surely should be, but the final decision as to the right or wrong course should rest on their elders. In the matter of his marriage I had left Nana perfectly free, but I succeeded in carrying out my wish because my method of influencing him was a right one. If the choice is left to the young they are influenced too much by the outer appearance, and too little attention is paid to such matters as family connections, character and domestic habits. I claim that looks as well as all other qualifications must be considered, but the latter are more important than the former. So that the question of whom to marry is one that should be settled by the joint consideration of the young man or woman and their guardians. Japan has adopted such a procedure, and we should do the same. It is important to know also the character of the parents of the prospective bride or bridegroom, because the characteristics of parents descend to their children.

The father of my daughter-in-law, Mr. Joshi, was a man of moderate education, but through reading he had gained considerable literary ability. He had composed simple songs suitable for little children, and he was never weary of gathering them about him, and spending hours in teaching them to sing these songs. It was his opinion that girls should be married only when they reach adult age, and in accordance with this opinion he had brought up his daughter. His other daughter had received the degree of B.A. from the Woman's College at Koveri, and is now the head of an English school at Sangle. Mr. Joshi's wife, Ramabai, is a most industrious woman, of mild temperament, and economical in her household management. A girl that has grown up in such a parental environment must partake of their characteristics. So I thought, and I experienced the truth of it. It was in accordance with such a principle that I had decided that their daughter was the right bride for my son.

The world has before it two principles relating to the choice of a husband or wife. The Western, where mutual love determines the choice, and the other, the Indian method, where the parent's choice predominates. Good and evil are to be found in both of these methods. Where choice depends on mutual love, the other important points of family connections, character and abilities receive no attention. This is one great fault in this method. And in our country it is usual for the parents to

settle on the choice, after considering such qualifications as family, characteristics and abilities, without giving any attention to the approval or disapproval of the to-be bride or bridegroom. This also is a great fault. If parents can gain the approval of their children to their choice, our system will be free from fault. And I think if the West would remove the fault in its method, it also would result in happier marriages. The reason for mentioning these two methods is that there is a tendency amongst us in India to adopt the Western method, but we must accept the method that will bring the most happiness to the home and family life. In order that my readers may have before them this problem of choice in marriage, with an example illustrating it, I have used the experience of my own son. In order that my son might have a happy married life, I brought it about in 1915, and now in 1928 if anyone should see their family happiness they would see that my ideas were right. Indeed they could not help seeing it.

The marriage of my son freed me from a great responsibility, and I could now devote myself more fully to the work of the Widows' Home.

CHAPTER XII

MY FRANTIC ATTEMPTS TO LEARN ENGLISH

THE very day that I finished my course at the Teachers' Training School, and began work in connection with the Widows' Home, I bought an English Primer and began my study of English. But because the Home at that time had need of all my time and strength, I found little time for that study, and my purpose to learn English had to be postponed.

In 1904, I began my work of collecting funds for the Institution and travelled from place to place. My pleadings in behalf of the education of widows resulted in an average monthly collection of about 300 rupees, and as food at that time was cheap this amount was sufficient for the support of fifty widows. Under those conditions I saw that although by giving all my time to the Institution I lost my opportunity of learning English, yet in so doing I enabled fifty widows to acquire English in the school. It was not, therefore, a loss I should complain of, and so putting aside attempts at learning English I gave my whole time heartily to the interests of the Home.

But in carrying on my work I found I had to go

outside the bounds of those speaking Marathi. Once when travelling to Cochin and Calicut, and unable to read the English names of the stations, and even more unable to read the names in the alphabets of those countries, I was carried several stations beyond where I had intended to alight. My work called me on occasions to some of the larger cities. If I saw a large bungalow or some great house, I would seek entrance to make my plea in behalf of widows. These bungalows often had English names on the posts of the gates, but as I could not read them, I had to ask others to read them for me. I thus had to suffer many inconveniences because of my ignorance of English. I, therefore, gradually came to the conclusion that I could not properly carry on my work without a knowledge of English, and again the desire to acquire it was awakened in me. So in 1912 I again bought an English primer, and began my study of that language. Professor Karve approved of my desire to know English and promised to help me. I began my course of study in Bombay, but again the Widows' Home needed me urgently, and again I had to postpone my studies and give my time to the Home.

In 1914 Professor Karve received a letter from Dr. Khandvala, in which he said that if I were placed in the Bandara Convent School, I would acquire English very quickly, and that he was ready to help me in every way he could. As the teachers in this school were missionary ladies, and the language used

in the boarding department was English, it seemed to Professor Karve that I would very speedily learn to speak English. In accordance with the advice given me I decided to begin my studies in the Bandara School. The Widows' Home was at this time better equipped with teachers, so I did not especially regret the temporary separation. I was 43 years of age when I went to this Convent School to learn English. I was given a room by myself. There was a Brahman restaurant near the school, and I arranged to have my food brought from there in a pail, so that I might eat separately from others. I had thought, of course, that I would be admitted with the girls in the English department. But because of my age I was not allowed to sit with the little children, and only for an hour in the afternoons I received instruction in English, and that of an indifferent sort, from a young Hindu girl who had become a Christian. I soon found that I was gaining no great advantage from my stay in the Convent, and my life there began to seem too much like imprisonment. Finally, through the efforts of Professor Karve the Superintendent of the Convent admitted me to the class of little girls. But here again because of my age I had to sit to one side, and both the girls and the teacher of the class paid as little attention to me as they could. I began to anxiously question how I was to acquire English if I had to sit in the class as dumb as a post. My thought, therefore, turned to the possibility of some better

school in Bombay. Dr. Khandvala gave his approval to a change, which after two months trial in the Convent school seemed desirable, and I was admitted to the Scottish Mission School near the Gwalior Tank in Bombay. But even here on account of my age I could not mix with the little girls, and the teacher did not pay the same attention to me as to them. So I did not get as much advantage from this school as I had expected. However, I continued in the school for about three years, namely, from 1915 to 1918, and somehow managed to reach the second and third standards. During vacations I was accustomed to return to the Widows' Home at Poona. Here Professor Karve gave me his special attention, much to my profit. When in Bombay I had, in a moderate way, carried on my work of collecting funds for the Widows' Home. I felt sorry that my endeavour to learn English should hinder me in my loved work for the Home, so that whatever time I could spare I had used it in pleading for help for the Home.

Because of the instruction received in the Mission School, I became able to read a little English, but I made no progress whatever in speaking English, and the great desire I had had, that through a knowledge of English I might do better work for the Home, found little encouragement. Professor Karve's son, Dr. Shankar Karve, suggested to me that I should live in some English family for say eight months, and thus quickly learn the language by

the direct method. I made an attempt but I found no English family willing to take me into their home, and so this plan fell through.

Then Professor Karve gained the idea that if I were sent into a foreign country where English was spoken I would not only see the different institutions of those countries, but at the same time my knowledge of English would be advanced. This idea gained strength, and the result was that I was sent to America. I had never even dreamed that I should ever see America.

CHAPTER XIII

PREPARATIONS FOR GOING TO AMERICA

WHEN thus in my forty-eighth year Professor Karve decided to send me to America, the idea was not at all approved by his associates in the Institution, nor by his best friends. Their opinion was that if anyone was to be sent to England or America, it should be some young graduate, approved for such an undertaking, but they regarded it a waste of money to send an old woman like myself, perhaps to die in a foreign country. Professor Karve had decided to send me because I was not financed by any Institution, and would depend on my own efforts for meeting my expenses in those foreign lands. There was no graduate of the Widows' Home who had prepared herself by a course of study and experience in work who could be depended upon to work her own way in a foreign country, and so I was chosen, I suppose, because of my experience as a worker.

Compared with the number of men who go to foreign countries to study, the women who go are very few. If the foreigner has superiority over us it is to be seen in his mental capacity, his scientific

knowledge, his power of organization and the like. So that one of the reasons I had for going to a foreign country was to learn from comparison and experience its educational and social systems. And then I thought that possibly I might be able to so present the cause of India's widows that the Poona Home would receive financial help. This was a second reason I had in mind for a visit to a foreign land. And still another reason was that I thought by going to a foreign English speaking country I should have the opportunity of learning the language by the direct method through contact with those who spoke it. Professor Karve and I were one in our understanding of the reasons for my decision to go to America, but the reason why there was serious misunderstanding in the minds of many was their ignorance of the purpose for which I was going. With that in mind I endured their misunderstandings without complaint.

Professor Karve thought at first of sending me to England, but as the World War was in progress, travelling to England was almost impossible. In America the education of women has been developed to a greater extent than in other countries, so that the thought that I should go to America filled me with joy. In making inquiries as to the possibility of some companion to go with me, we learned that Professor Dharmananda Kosambi was going to America to teach Pali in Harvard University, taking with him his daughter, who had just passed the Previous Ex-

The Karve Reading Room which marks the change that is taking place in the thoughts and outlook of Indian women.

The Khatau Manakji Hostel connected with the Women's College brings together girls from a variety of castes, and thus helps break down these barriers that by age long custom have kept the castes apart.

Work and play combined in the garden. If pictures could speak these merry Indian girls would be heard laughing over their work of digging, planting, watering and weeding.

Exercise with light Indian clubs. Under the Sanskrit name of mudgara (Marathi mudgal) Indian athletes, to exercise their muscles, have for centuries been swinging the Indian clubs.

amination, and his fourteen year old son. Professor Karve corresponded with him. My going was definitely settled, and he agreed to take me with him. He advised that in American Night Schools it would be very easy for me to continue my study of English, which, of course, greatly pleased me. All the arrangements were therefore made, and Professor Karve gave my passage money to Professor Kosambi and placed me in his care.

As most of those who objected to my going to America were those who had been there, I was unable to obtain the necessary information as to what clothes I should wear, nor what arrangements I should make for my food. Professor Kosambi had, however, been over to America, so with his help I managed somehow or other to arrange for my wardrobe. I took with me four Gujarati silk saris, one overcoat, some night-gowns, six cotton petticoats, and two pairs of shoes along with a few other things. But I found on the voyage that I had not provided myself with the right things, and as a consequence I had to suffer many inconveniences.

On the fifth of August 1918, I said a sad goodbye to friends and set sail on a P. and O. steamer for Hongkong, in the care of Professor Kosambi.

CHAPTER XIV

THE VOYAGE TO AMERICA

I HAVE no words to describe those waves of emotion that stirred my mind when on the P. and O. steamer I had my last glimpse of my native land on the Bombay coast. Our steamer was to go as far as Hongkong, where we were to change to another steamer going to San Francisco. There were some Indian passengers on board. Those going to Singapore consisted of a Gujarati family. A student from Ahmedabad by name of Metha was going to America and a Shikh gentleman to Hongkong. Mr. Kosambi's daughter and I shared a cabin together.

Those who are vegetarians, and who wish to continue such, have to suffer many privations on a steamer. The arrangements for eating, the cabin arrangements, and bathing arrangements, if entirely new to one, result in terrible discomforts.

For appearance sake only I used to appear every day in the dining room. There was nothing that I could eat but bread and butter and fruit. But it was a good opportunity for me to observe the arrangement of spoons and forks at a table, and learn English table manners. Although I went into the dining room I could not eat anything there, and the

light fare that I took in the cabin, only brought me at first intense discomfort. But finally by my acquaintance with the Gujarati family I began to receive from them every day a plate of Indian food, which lessened my discomfort.

Mr. Nathubhai, the Gujarati merchant and his family who were going as far as Singapore, had brought with them some Indian food called *kukar* and, in addition, such things as pickles, and other dainties, aids to a light lunch. The merchant used to cook the kukars in the kitchen, and send me some of them. In this way my difficulties in connection with food were somewhat relieved. After I became well acquainted with Mr. Metha, he was of much assistance to me during the remainder of the voyage.

After leaving Bombay our first stop was at Colombo. Our steamer stopped there only six hours, but a friend of Professor Kosambi took us for a motor ride and showed us a large Buddhist temple. That day I walked about in great agony, for my shoes hurt me. This was the first time in all my life that I had worn a pair of European shoes. They seemed so heavy to me. Professor Kosambi purchased another pair, but it was no better. My feet were covered with blisters. Even on the boat going barefoot is not convenient, but I could not endure the torture from my shoes. My advice is that any Indian woman, about to go to a foreign country, should practice at least three months the wearing of European shoes before going aboard the steamer.

It took us ten or twelve days to go from Colombo to Singapore. Mr. Nathubhai the merchant invited us all to his home at Singapore, and it was a joy to spend a day or two on land. At Singapore I also met Mr. Bhaskar Dongare, formerly of Poona. He invited Professor Kosambi and myself to a tea party, and gave us a hearty welcome.

After Singapore our next stop was Hongkong, where we had to change steamers. That meant a stay of three days in Hongkong. At the hotel we were being charged six yen a day. Mr. Metha, however, was able to make an arrangement with a Shikh merchant of his acquaintance for our board and lodging, and thereby we were saved much annoyance and expense. From there in the Japanese Company's S.S. *Tennu Maru* we set sail for San Francisco.

This Japanese company takes Indians from India to America in the first cabin only. This imposes a needless expense on Indians. European travellers are taken second class, and I cannot understand this discrimination against Indian students and merchants.

From Hongkong, stopping at Shanghai, Nagasaki and other ports we finally reached Tokio. Here a friend of Mr. Metha, Mr. Shantilal, took us around Tokio and showed us the Japanese Women's University. As I saw the arrangements of this university I remembered that Professor Karve had founded just such an institution in India, and that made me feel very happy.

After Hongkong the merchant Nathubhai was no

longer with us and so I had no more of his store of Indian food. I, therefore, had to depend on the food the ship provided, bread and butter and fruit. This was all I could eat. Those who travel by steamers should take pains to arrange for food such as they are accustomed to. As I had not done so, I suffered for lack of food, and after leaving Honolulu I developed a cough and low fever. And aside from this, my cabin was near the engine, and its noise and vibration was most troublesome to me and my body seemed as if on fire. My companions laid my illness to my insufficient food, and my worrying over my friends at home. In view of my illness, Mr. Metha gave me kindly advice which I took. He told me what electric buttons to press to bring a nurse. There were so many electric buttons in my cabin I did not know what ones to press for my different needs. So I asked Mr. Metha to press the button for me. That brought the nurse and she called the doctor. He examined me and I began to take his medicine. He prescribed a milk diet, but the milk on the steamer was poor, and, in consequence, I suffered not a little. The doctor's medicine did me some good, but my cough and fever still continued. My milk diet and my illness made me weak. And I now began to be deeply concerned as to what would happen to me after reaching San Francisco. We finally entered the harbour of San Francisco and it took a whole day to go through those ceremonies connected with the medical and

customs examinations. The next day in company with Professor Kosambi and his family, we motored to a great luxurious hotel. All our belongings had not come from the steamer and, moreover, because of my ignorance of how to travel, I did not have sufficiently warm clothing with me, and in the cold rooms of the hotel I suffered from the cold and from my weakness.

My illness increased. Professor Kosambi and his family went out to a restaurant for their food. On account of my weakness I was unable to go with them, and I asked them to bring back some milk for me. According to the custom of the country the milk came in a bottle and was intensely cold. And because I had no way in my room of heating the milk, my first day in this hotel was one of total fasting. The next day I was somehow led into a restaurant, but aside from some milk I was unable to eat anything. Under these circumstances in which I was unable to arrange properly for my food or care, my illness increased. I did not think myself able to continue my journey with Professor Kosambi to Boston, and he also thought I would not be able to endure the hardships of so long a journey. It was necessary for Professor Kosambi to hurry on to Boston to begin his work, so he decided to put me in charge of someone until I could recover my health. It had been my intention to go on with Professor Kosambi, to live in their home, aid them in their domestic life, and to attend a night school for gain-

ing a knowledge of English. But now this intention had to be postponed. I had to make up my mind that like many a poor Indian student I would have to work my way, earning enough to pay for my schooling and living, struggling against adverse circumstances. I asked Professor Kosambi to put me in charge of some Indian student in the University in San Francisco. But Professor Kosambi was unable to find the addresses of Indian students quickly, and moreover hesitated about putting me in charge of anyone with whom he was unacquainted, so he decided to find a place for me in the Young Women's Christian Association. He told me of this decision and I agreed to it.

Life in the hotel had become intolerable, and so being agreeable to Professor Kosambi's proposal, I was put in charge of the secretary of the Y.W.C.A. There was a balance of two hundred dollars from the expenses of my voyage, and this was given in charge of the Secretary with the understanding that if I did not recover my health the money was to be used in sending me back to India, but if I recovered I was to be sent on to Boston to be with them. Having made this arrangement Professor Kosambi, his daughter Manak, and his son, left for Boston.

The reader may imagine the pain that it caused the friends who brought me to America, to leave me in my weak condition among strangers, and the distress this caused me.

CHAPTER XV

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE OF MY CHRISTIAN SISTERS

WHEN I was first placed in this institution of Christian women I was physically very weak. I had not recovered from my cough and fever. I was not able to speak English freely, and I could not properly understand English when it was spoken to me. I could understand easy sentences when spoken slowly, but Americans speak rather quickly, and their pronunciation sounded somewhat peculiar, so that at first I was often in great perplexity. On account of these difficulties my stay in the Y.W.C.A. brought me many incidents strange to me.

For the first two or three days I went with the Secretary to a restaurant for my meals. But as I was unable to eat anything in the restaurant except bread and butter, milk and fruit, I asked her whether this food could not be brought up to my room. She very kindly agreed to this arrangement. And from that time she herself brought my food to my room. The room I occupied was a very nice one. The bathroom with its tub and other arrangements was most excellent. My room was warm, so that though I had insufficient clothes, I suffered little from the cold.

Although my living and food arrangements were satisfactory, my cough still continued and gave me a great deal of trouble. Instead of calling a doctor and spending my money on him, I decided to try a simple natural method for the cure of my cough and fever. So for twenty minutes each night I applied hot water to my chest, and rested in bed from nine in the evening to seven in the morning. This method of cure proved successful. I began to feel well again, and I gave thanks to God for freeing me from my illness.

I now saw that if I was to obtain an education in America I should have to earn it by my own personal effort. And so I began by voluntarily making the bed in the Secretary's room, cleaning the windows, and sweeping her room. I paid close attention to how the maids in the Home did their work, and by copying them I learned how to care for the Secretary's room. She was pleased with my efforts, and encouraged me with many kind suggestions. I had now been five days in this Y.W.C.A. Home, and at the rate of two and a half dollars a day, I had already spent about fifty rupees out of my limited purse. I felt, therefore, that I must find work somewhere. I saw that in America if one's money is all gone, starvation is the next step. So I kept asking the Secretary to find me work somewhere, and she began to search for me.

It was well that I had by God's mercy recovered from my illness, for Professor Kosambi had charged

the Secretary to send me back to India if I did not recover. If my illness had increased, the prophecy of those who criticized my action would have come true, that the old woman was going to America to die, and I should have failed to do anything for the Widows' Home that I loved. But while my recovery freed me from a very difficult position, still unemployment and starvation stood before me, and it was necessary to face them. It would require but a month and a half or so to exhaust my fund of $150.00, or about 400 rupees. And if I remained unemployed, according to American poor laws I should be turned over to the British authorities and sent back to India, and the expense of deporting me would be collected from my friends in India. I consider such a fate worse than death, and I have to thank God for delivering me from it.

The Secretary was successful in finding me work in a Home for aged and pensioned missionaries in Oakland. The Secretary went with me to see me get started, and introduced me to the Superintendent of the Home. As she had once been a missionary in the country where Marathi is spoken, she asked me many questions about Mission work in Ahmednagar, and about Pandita Ramabai's work at Khedgav. Finally she said, "Just as formerly Jesus sent Ramabai to America for her education, so He has sent you. So may He save you." With this blessing she set me to work.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MISSIONARY HOME OF PEACE

THE Secretary of the Y.W.C.A. put me in charge of the Superintendent of the Missionary's Home at Oakland, near San Francisco. This Home of Peace is where missionaries may come who have worked long in India or other countries, and now in their old age find here a home. And here I had to earn my living by keeping the dining room, chapel, and library swept and dusted, washing the dishes of the dining room, and keeping the window-panes clean.

I had a room by myself in this Home of Peace. I was allowed to have a separate table from others and to make my own arrangement as to food, as it pleased me. While in this Home I was able to arrange for the same food to which I was accustomed in India. I had to work continuously from morning until night. As the custom in America is to have a separate dish for every course, each person uses about ten dishes. So working under a maid whose duty was to wash the dishes, I had each day to wash about four hundred dishes. While I was performing my duties of cleaning the rooms, washing the dishes and the window-panes, some of

the missionaries who had worked in India, but who were now resting from their labours in this Home, spent their vacant moments in coming to me and preaching Christianity to me. They said, "Unless you accept Christ neither you nor your country can be saved." My constant answer was, "Teach me English. I shall then be able to compare your religion with mine, and I shall surely accept the religion that I think is true." I soon saw that my answer had some effect on my would-be saviours, for in two or three days an aged missionary lady began to teach me to read from the Bible. My Bible reading was on about the same plain as that of children in a primer class, but I was pleased, for I began to gain in my knowledge of English.

After being four or five days in this Missionary Home of Peace I found that I got no peace. I became anxious as to my future, and as to whether I was going to accomplish the purpose for which Professor Karve had sent me to America. Moreover in making an effort to find employment, I seemed to have jumped from the frying pan into the fire. Without intending to do so, and driven by my Fate, I had become caught in this Missionary Home of Peace. To suppose that I could learn English in such a place, and be able to study the American system of education for which I had come, was like chasing after a mirage for water. And moreover I began to fear the methods used to make me a Christian. I determined, however, that

whatever difficulties I might meet with, I would never leave my own religion.

When my daily tasks were finished in the evening, and the evening prayers in the chapel were over, I used to go to my room to rest my mind, and there I read the twelfth chapter of the Bhagavadgita, and then I prayed, "O God, Krishna, here in America Thou alone art my Saviour." With this prayer I used to go to sleep. I was in this Home of Peace but ten days, when in a most marvellous way the way opened to leave it. But those ten days were days of anxiety and discomfort. My health was now good, and I had no discomforts from my living or food arrangements, but my mind was in great perplexity as to how I was to get free from that Home. I had to exercise great courage of mind to endure those ten days.

I had written a letter to a Dr. Kokatnur, whose address had been given me by Professor Chiplunkar, who teaches in our Poona Home for Widows, asking him to give the address of some Indian student in San Francisco, and telling him of my history and of my desire to be taken away from the Home of Peace to some other worthy place. I had not much expectation that I would receive an answer to my letter. But a drowning man clutches with hope at every straw. It was with that idea that I had sent that letter. But with God's help that letter proved my salvation. This Dr. Kokatnur was employed in a great factory at Niagara Falls. Dr. Kokat-

nur sent my letter on to New York to the office of "Young India", a periodical started by Lala Rajpatrai. As soon as Dr. Hardikar of the "Young India" office received Dr. Kokatnur's and my letters, he telegraphed to San Francisco and Berkeley, "The Indian students, merchants and American Theosophists should give all possible help to the Indian woman who finds herself in difficulty." This telegram brought forth results, and on a Saturday night at ten o'clock a telephone message was received at the Home. "Is Parvatibai, lately from India, at your Home?" The reply was given in the affirmative, and they were informed that if they came the next day, Sunday, at noon she could be seen.

When I understood all this I felt a new life. And while doing my work that day my imagination was full of the prospect that I might be able to go and live with these Indians who were to call upon me. Finally the long-to-be-remembered Sunday dawned, and from eleven o'clock I sat on the veranda of the Home full of anticipation of meeting these good sons of India. At twelve o'clock I saw three handsome Indian students approaching, and it seemed to me as though Krishna had assumed the form of Brahmadev, Vishnu and Shiva, and had come to give protection to this lowly widow from another land. As I met these Indian students my eyes filled with tears. I leave it to my readers to guess what were my and their thoughts as we met. All of these Indian students spoke the Marathi lan-

guage, and were from Poona and Bombay. They urged me to come with them and stay at Berkeley where they were staying. But being somewhat acquainted with the financial condition of Indian students, I told them to call and see me occasionally, and not add to their financial burdens by having me with them. The students insisted however on my going with them. Finally I assented, and having explained the situation to the Superintendent of the Home, the young men in their kindly zeal stood ready to carry my things. Thus through one letter I was able to get my freedom from this Missionary Home of Peace, and saying goodbye to the people in the Home I went with my friends to Berkeley, there to live for a while.

CHAPTER XVII

MY RELATIONS WITH INDIAN STUDENTS

IT was with great joy that I went to live with the Indian students from my own part of India, in the city of Berkeley. The house in which we lived was a two story house, and in a good locality. The students and myself lodged on the first floor. The second floor was occupied by an American family. As the cold in California is never intense, there was no heating arrangement such as is found in other American houses. We, therefore, installed an electric heater. It was very useful to us whenever it was very cold. On account of the moderate heat and cold of California, Indian students find it a healthier and more agreeable place to live in than in other States of America.

I called these students with whom I was now living by their first names, and they treated me and honoured me as if I were their aunt. The student who had been the longest in America, and had the largest experience was Keshavrav. He had come to America in 1907. He had finished his course in a Technical Institution in India and had come to America for further study. For a time his uncle

sent him money, but finally he had to earn his own living while completing his studies. On account of having to earn his way he was unable to acquire even in his ten years here the knowledge for which he had come. At the time I went to live with them he was employed in a factory at a wage of $150 a month. He had rented the house in which we lived and the other students depended on him.

Damodar, the second Indian student, came for study in America in 1908. He did not receive sufficient support from his home friends in India, so he had often to leave his studies at the College and seek employment somewhere. Under these conditions he was unable to make the progress in his studies that he otherwise would have done.

Vasudev, the third Indian student had been a teacher of Mathematics in India, and had come to Berkeley for further study. His worldly affairs were far from satisfactory, so like the other students he had to make frantic efforts for an education as well as a livelihood.

I had a good opportunity here to see how hard the Indian student in America, who has to depend on his own efforts, has to work in rendering due homage to Sarasvati, the Goddess of Knowledge. And as I had to expect the same experience as they, I very carefully watched their mode of life. Keshavrav, Damodar, and Vasudev after a very light breakfast went to their work or college and did not return until evening. I prepared their coffee or tea for

their light morning breakfasts. For the evening meal I prepared the bread, rice, pickles and vegetables. When the students returned in the evening they would take their food as they would in a restaurant and then go out. Keshavrav was accustomed to return late, and in order that he might not injure his health by having to eat stale food I cooked a meal especially for him. I had to get up at six o'clock in the morning to do my work, but after the students had gone out in the evening I used to spend my vacant time in study and in household duties. As we were all poor, we used to take in only about a quart of milk a day. The students took a little of it, but because of my age and health they insisted that I should drink the milk. There were but three mattresses between us, the three students took two, but I was given the third, though I protested against it. Keshavrav was not well. He had a slow fever and I felt very anxious about him. He had to work from early morning until night, having no other resources but himself. His health was not good, and he had to take from his earnings to help his two friends. And my coming brought an added burden on him. I had now only $100 left. I was ready to work, and I often requested my Indian student friends to find me some work, but their reply was, "Parvatibai, it seems to us a shameful thing to compel you to go to work so long as we young men are alive. Though we are poor we shall take care of you. Adding one more to us three does

not seem a heavy thing for us. Feel this to be your home and be without care."

Under those conditions I spent some time as the cook for these three Indian students, but I realized that such a life would make impossible the purpose for which Professor Karve had sent me to America. This increased my mental depression. Moreover, I felt badly over the pitiable condition of these Indian students. Thus my unhappy life began to be intolerable, and I kept wondering how I could escape from it. I received very little sympathy from these Indian students in regard to the purpose for which I had come to America. They used to say to me, "Why did Professor Karve send one of your age to America?" I thought these boys would teach me English, but they had hardly time for their own work, let alone teaching me. Being in America one would think I would learn English by the direct method of hearing it spoken, but in the house I heard nothing but the Marathi, and I seldom had the opportunity of going outside. My aim also to obtain help for the Widows' Home in Poona became impossible. I became acquainted here at Berkeley with a Mr. and Mrs. Bagard, a Panjabi family. There are many *Shikhs* living in California, employed as labourers, and there are many Bengali and Panjabi students, but from lack of acquaintance with any of these I found help from them impossible. One day in cleaning the cupboard of Keshav I came upon an address book of his, in which I saw the name of

Professor Gokhale, who formerly had been professor at Indore. I felt that if I could but go to him I should be able to realize my purpose, so with Keshav's help I sent a letter to him telling him of my condition and my desire to come to him.

Professor Gokhale was living at Schenectady, New York. It would take six days of railway journey to go to him. The ticket alone would cost about $150 or about 450 rupees. I did not possess that amount of money. I wrote and told this to Professor Gokhale. But by good fortune I received a letter from him inviting me to come, and sending me the money necessary for the journey. I shall never forget the kindness he showed me. From lack of money it was not possible for any one to accompany me on my long journey, so I had to meet all its experiences alone. Keshav helped me to buy the ticket, and he wrote down in English the names of the two cities where I should have to change trains. He telegraphed for reservations on the trains I was to take, and sent Mr. Gokhale a schedule of the trains I should be on. Thus prepared I started on my journey.

CHAPTER XVIII

MY SIX DAYS' RAILWAY JOURNEY

WITH the money Professor Gokhale sent me from Schenectady, and Keshav's help in buying a ticket and seating me in the train, I began for the first time a railway journey in America, and had the experience of making the journey all alone.

In India I had made many long railway journeys in the interests of the Widows' Home. But I found a great difference travelling in America from travelling in India. To begin with I did not know the language spoken in America. I had no knowledge whatever of American customs, and as I was a vegetarian, I had to meet with many difficulties in a meat eating country. In this railway journey therefore I experienced difficulties to the full.

Every train in America has a dining car connected with it. Every morning I used to go into the dining car and take bread and butter and tea. Just for that I had to spend 12 annas. After that I would eat nothing in the dining car until the next morning. I had brought with me some biscuits and fruit, but they were not of much use to me. Every evening I bought a package of peanuts for ten cents, which

was sold by someone passing through the train. That was my only evening meal. This was my experience for the six days.

After three days of travel I had to change trains at Chicago, and then the day after at Buffalo. To change from one train to another was a terrible trial to me. In broken English I would say to some American lady traveller, "I am Indian. I have no language. Will you help me to change the car?" and with her help I was able to make the change, and take my seat. Thus after six days of travel I arrived at Schenectady at eleven o'clock at night. Professor Gokhale had sent me a plan showing how I was to go from the station to his house, but I was thoroughly bewildered by the thought of how, at that time of night, I was to reach Professor Gokhale's house. After quiet reigned in the station I went to the station master. The station master was a great big man, but very polite. I showed him the plan, and pointing to the place said, "I want to go here." He motioned to me to sit down on the opposite bench. I sat there for two hours, wondering all the while what the station master was intending to do. Finally two of his subordinates arrived, and he asked them to accompany me to Professor Gokhale's house. Professor Gokhale's house was not very far from the station and we walked to it. The officials knocked on Professor Gokhale's door, but for ten minutes we got no reply. It was terribly cold, and our feet were freezing, and the men who

came with me were anxious to get back to the station.

Perhaps I had missed the number of the house, and so another fear arose before me. What would happen if I had missed it! Then I went myself to the door and knocked again. This time the door opened, and a man came to the door. He turned out to be a missionary, living on the first floor. Professor Gokhale lived on the floor above. At first I thought this missionary was Professor Gokhale, that coming to America he had grown stout and that according to American custom he had shaved off his mustache. But it proved otherwise. That day being Christmas, the gentleman gave me a piece of candy and then went up to call Professor Gokhale. Professor Gokhale soon came down and gave me a nearby room which he had engaged for me. He introduced me to the housekeeper, Mrs. Sikor, saying to her, "As I have to go very early to my work, see to all her wants and give her whatever she needs." The mattress on my bed was not good, so Professor Gokhale told her to give me his mattress, and he went downstairs and slept in the missionary's room below.

Keshav had sent a telegram to Professor Gokhale to say that I was leaving, but as he did not tell him when to expect me, he was unable to meet me at the station. This was the reason why I was put to so much trouble, as I afterwards learned.

CHAPTER XIX

MY EXPERIENCES AT SCHENECTADY

IT requires twelve hours for a railway journey from Schenectady to New York. The General Electric has a great plant here for the generation of electricity. 26,000 men are employed in this plant. Professor Gokhale is employed here as an electrical engineer. His spare time he devotes to the uplift of the working man. He is the author of a book on *Unemployment,* published in America.

The name of the landlady from whom Professor Gokhale rented his rooms was Mrs. Sikor. There were seven or eight lodgers in her house. She had two daughters and one son. I was given a separate room in this house. As requested by Professor Gokhale, Mrs. Sikor helped me to everything I needed. The daughters went to the market and brought me rice and milk. I used to boil the rice in my own room occasionally, and eat it there. My usual food was bread and butter and milk. In order that I might know a maid's work in an American home, Mrs. Sikor, at Professor Gokhale's request gave me instruction. For two months I lived

in this way with Mrs. Sikor. Then growing weary of being a burden to Professor Gokhale, I began to seek for work. I asked Mrs. Sikor to find work for me, and she watched the notices in the papers of "Girls Wanted" "Women Wanted".

The first work I obtained through the efforts of Mrs. Sikor was with a Jewish doctor. I had to do maid's work in his house from eight o'clock in the morning until four in the afternoon. He agreed to give me three dollars a week, or about nine rupees a week. I worked for one week in this house. Then through Professor Gokhale's efforts I obtained work with a Jewish friend of his, by name of Appleman. Here I did general housework. Until now I did not know how to dress small American children. The lady of the house gave me instruction how to do it, so that every day I dressed the year and a half old son and the three and six years old daughters. On the whole my life with this family was comfortable, but a return of fever compelled me to leave them.

Again through the efforts of Mrs. Sikor I found work in a suburb, an hour's ride from where we were living, with a gentleman named David, working in the General Electric, and a man of wealth. I had a room by myself, and my food arrangements were to my liking. Here I received five dollars a week or about fifteen rupees a week. I worked for five weeks here. But because I was working as a maid I saw it was impossible to become acquainted with Amer-

ican families, which was one of the purposes of my coming to America, nor was my learning of English progressing as I had wished. Then I thought of a clever way of getting acquainted with American families. I had heard that women in America sometimes take up the employment of a book agent. Not many copies of Professor Gokhale's book on *Unemployment* had been sold, and many were lying in his house. On a Sunday I went to call on Professor Gokhale and told him of my plan to sell his books and gain some experience. He approved of my proposal and gave me ten copies for a trial. On account of the cold the doors of American houses are always closed, so that if one wishes to speak with the lady of the house, one must either knock or ring a bell. My method of selling the books required me to do this. After finishing my work at Mr. David's at three o'clock in the afternoon, I began to go with my books from house to house. I rang the bell, and asked the lady of the house whether she would buy one of my books. In this way I sold about forty copies of Professor Gokhale's book, and at the same time made some acquaintances. While I was spending my spare time in selling these books, Mr. David's former maid returned, and my employment there ceased. But while working for Mr. David I became acquainted with a Mrs. Anies, whose husband worked in the General Electric. She required a maid, and I went to work for her. I worked five or six weeks with them, and

they expressed themselves as highly pleased with my services. I had a very nice room to myself, but Mr. Anies was transferred to Boston and again I had to seek for work. In every house where I worked I received a letter of recommendation when I left. As an example I quote the following from Mr. Anies.

May 29, 1919

Mrs. Parvatibai Athavale has proven absolutely trustworthy, honest and of very high character, and I am glad to recommend her for light household work.

Frank H. Anies, Schenectady, N. Y.

After leaving the service of Mr. and Mrs. Anies, I obtained the position of dishwasher in a large hospital connected with the work of the Y.W.C.A. Here I was to receive 15 dollars a week.

Professor Gokhale and Mrs. Sikor gave me full instructions as to how I was to reach this hospital, where I expected to work. Unfortunately a few days before having to go to the hospital I had a bilious attack. For the five or six months since leaving India I had lived on bread and butter, milk and fruits, with sometimes a change of rice. But with a change in my diet, or because of the climate I had this bilious attack. But I did not like to give up the work at the hospital on the plea of illness, and thinking that I would soon be well, I

arrived at the hospital one Sunday morning. The general housekeeper informed me of my duties, and I began my work in my bilious condition. The hospital in which I went to work was a building of three stories with accommodation for about 500 patients. The patients were assigned to the second and third stories. The first story was set apart for the kitchen and the rooms of the staff. It was my fate to be given a room through which large steam pipes carried the heat to the upper stories. The room was close, only moderately lighted, and drops of water frequently fell from the steam pipes onto my bed. Never since coming to America had I had such a room as that.

The staff of the hospital consisted of about one hundred persons, whose living and food arrangements were very much better than those of us who had the lowly work to do. The laundry maids, cooks, and other servants had their dining table on the first floor, and their rooms were those close ones which I have already described. I had to go to the second story to wash dishes, under the direction of the chief dish-washer. In America each patient has a separate dish for each food, so that every day there are thousands of dishes to be washed. In the dish-washing room a pipe brought in an abundance of hot water. Those who have not gained skill in the art of washing dishes, find their first attempts at it very difficult.

I began this work, and accepted the living arrange-

ments when in rather bad health. The steam in the wash room became nauseating. There was also the vile odour from the food that I had to scrape from the plates. All this increased my bilious condition and brought on vomiting. I managed to go into the room assigned to me, a room I have already described. When I saw water dropping from the pipes above onto my bed, it seemed to me that I had jumped from the frying pan into the fire. But what was to be done? I threw myself on my bed and rang for the housekeeper. She, poor woman, was very nice. She passed her hands over me, encouraged me, and then sent for the doctor to examine me. He prescribed a warm bath. The bath room was some 200 feet from my room. I took my bath, and then was seized with dizziness and all was black around me. How was I to return to my room? Just then I saw the housekeeper approaching on one of her errands, and I motioned to her to come to me. I then fainted, and what happened after that I learned later. A stretcher was brought and I was taken to my room. I was seized with vomiting on the way. The nurse however helped me, and I was placed on my bed. I lay four days on my bed. The closeness of the room and the malodours added to my suffering. My room was on the first floor as I have said, and the kitchen being on that same floor, truck loads of fresh fish and meat were daily brought there for the patients. And in my illness I had to suffer the stench that came from this meat. When

I accepted the duty of a dish-washer in the hospital I had no idea that I should so soon be a patient there, and others have to wash my dishes. The housekeeper took excellent care of me during my illness. She used to come and sit by my side. I often remarked to her, "I came here to work and I am very much ashamed to be lying here ill." She would reply, "You are very clean. You are a high caste woman. You are not used to this kind of work. It is better you should leave." When the housekeeper saw I was not gaining under the care of the hospital doctor, she called in an outside doctor of her acquaintance. I began to take his medicine. To this American housekeeper I was altogether a foreigner, but seeing her taking care of me, as if I were one of her own people, created in my mind a great respect for American women.

In about a week my health improved. The housekeeper took me out for a drive. As we were passing the house of a friend of hers by name of Mrs. Baldwin, the latter called out to her, "How are you? Well, I hope," and then enquired about me. The housekeeper told her all about me and my desire to find work as a maid. It happened that Mrs. Baldwin needed a maid and a nurse. She decided at once to accept me, and asked me to bring my things that very evening. I did so, and at once began my work. Thus came about my resignation from the duties of a dish-washer at the hospital, and the loving farewell I gave to the housekeeper.

I purposely did not inform Professor Gokhale or Mrs. Sikor of my illness at the hospital. It seemed needless to trouble them. It was enough that they should know that I was at the hospital. After I had fully recovered my health I informed them.

I found myself in a very nice family. Mr. Baldwin was a man receiving a large salary in the General Electric. Mrs. Baldwin was of a happy and loving disposition.

Of all the families I had met in America this one I liked the best. But the wheels of Fate caught me even here, and were about to drag me out of America. Only by the greatest courage I escaped.

CHAPTER XX

AN ATTEMPT TO FORCE ME TO LEAVE AMERICA

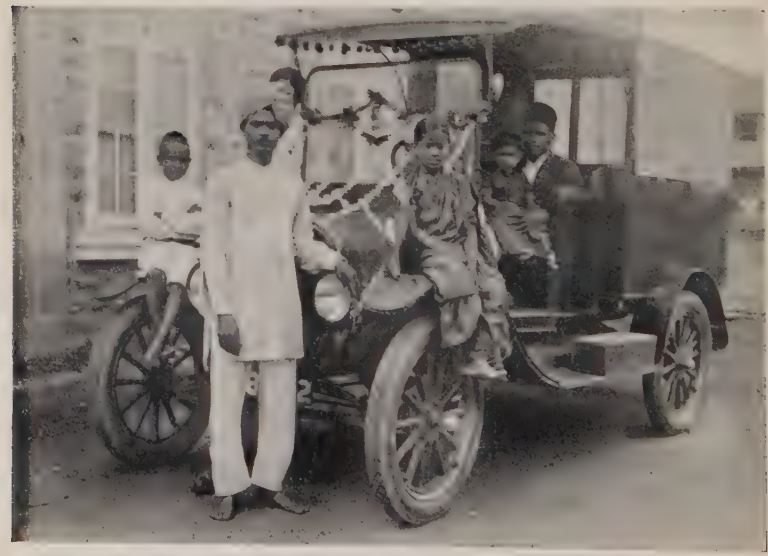
AS I have already said it was through the effort of the Hospital housekeeper that I obtained work in the family of Mr. Baldwin, a high official in the General Electric. I had here a room by myself. I was able to have such food as I desired. The cook was a Norwegian. She was very kind to me, and respected my vegetarian habits. My mistress had two children of the ages of eight and twelve. I had to dress them, besides doing all the housework. Thus Mr. Baldwin had the combination of a Norwegian and an Indian to do his work. Although we were servants in this family, yet the arrangements for our living were as luxurious as those of a high official in India, and although I was a servant, my mistress treated me with love and as a companion.

My life in this family was continuing very happily, when one day a telephone message from a Bengali student asked me to call upon him. This Bengali student had come to America to study electrical engineering. Through Mr. Baldwin he had learned about me. On a Saturday I went to call on him. Our conversation was as follows.

Graduates in Arts of the Class of 1927. After passing the Entrance Examination for a College Course, the student has to study three years before she can appear for the Graduates in Arts degree Examination.

The Widows' Home Girl Guides with their badges and their smiles. A magnifying glass on this picture will reveal their intelligent faces and their smiles, and would reveal, if it could, their bright colored saris.

Graduates of the College for Women. An educated Indian woman is a model of executive ability. These graduates are now teachers and organizers of other schools.



A Ford, the gift of New York ladies in answer to a pressing need, and the little girl on the mud guard says "Thank you."

Student—Why did you commit the mistake of coming here to America, sent by Professor Karve?

I—Professor Karve sent me here to learn of American educational institutions and to learn the English language.

Student—You have been born into a noble Brahman family, and why do you work as a servant in the home of one who is outside of the Hindu castes.

I—Why shouldn't I? I am not a thief. I work honestly for my livelihood, and in my spare moments I try to fulfill the purpose for which I came here. Am I in that doing anything that is wrong?

Student—You ought not to wander about seeking employment from house to house as a servant. Don't remain any longer in this country. Your life here makes us Indians extremely ashamed of you.

I—I have as much national pride as you have. And like other Indian students I have accepted the method of independence, living by my own efforts. I see nothing to be ashamed of in this. On the contrary I think it is to my honour.

Student—There is nothing in all that. Although you may not be ashamed, yet to work in a foreigner's house, and wash his dishes brings a stain on Brahmanhood. You must go back to your own land.

I—I have not money enough to go back to India. If you are able to make the needed arrangements for going, plan it and I will take it into consideration.

Such in substance was the conversation between the Bengali student and myself. As a matter of fact, although Mr. Baldwin was not a Brahman by birth, yet by his true character and noble living, he was a Brahman. And in no way did I think it beneath me to work as a servant in his family. I had adopted the method of other Indian students, that of depending on their own efforts, but this Bengali student thought it a shame that I should do so. He had evidently made up his mind that forcibly or otherwise he would get me back to India. This threw me into great perplexity. This student interviewed Professor Gokhale, and pretending great love for his Indian sister, filled Professor Gokhale's mind with his own false patriotic sentiments. Professor Gokhale informed him that if anyone could be found going back to India, he would supply the means to send me with him. Having obtained this unexpected promise of Professor Gokhale's, the love of this Bengali brother for me received new impetus, and without giving any consideration as to whether I wanted to return to India or not, he continued making the arrangements for my going and without so much as telling me of them.

At this juncture, my Bengali brother heard that a Burmese student was returning to his country. So he decided that I should go with him, and even went so far as to purchase my steamer ticket. He brought a trunk and suitcase, and like a son began to help me in my packing. Expecting that I was now to go

back to India, Professor Gokhale bade me an affectionate farewell. Although I did not wish to leave America, still I felt I must throw aside my selfish feelings, and yield to the wishes of my friends. So successful had he been in making arrangements for my going that if I had refused, it would have seemed as if there was enmity between a Maharashtra woman and the Bengali, and this in the sight of foreigners, and in a foreign land, a spectacle of incompatibility and hostility. In order that such a spectacle might not be displayed, I let this Bengali student pull the string that determined my life. It brought comfort and peace to him. I accepted the way he showed me as the right way. I accepted his opinion as my authority. In accordance with this decision I now made my preparations. My Bengali brother was sincere in his feeling of shame that I should wander hither and thither to find a maid's employment, and I had no doubt that his purpose was true and honest. I became thoroughly convinced that in sending me back to India he felt he was doing a brotherly act. So I made no special resistance. I put my trust in God and waited to see what would happen. With great sorrow I said goodbye to the Baldwin family, Sikorbai, and Professor Gokhale, all loving friends, and left Schenectady with my Bengali brother for New York.

On arrival in New York my Bengali brother placed me in the Y.W.C.A. Home. I had to promise him that I would stay where I was and go to see no one.

It was on this promise that he placed me in charge of the Superintendent of the Home. Then he informed his Indian friends that he had freed a Maratha woman from slavery in a non-Hindu home, and had brought her to New York in order to send her back to her own country, but that they were at liberty to call upon her. As soon as they heard of this, two students in the Vedanta Home, Swami Bodhananda and Surendra Bose, and some of their Bengali friends came to interview me, and to praise the prowess of their Bengali friend. They asked me whether I was glad to go back to my native land. I replied I was not glad. I felt very much ashamed that I was returning without having accomplished the purpose for which I came. "Why have you wandered from house to house doing common work," they asked. I replied, "What harm is there in going from family to family, gaining experience, learning English, and having opportunities of seeing American educational institutions?" "Then why do you make haste to go," was their next question. "I go because I have promised my Bengali friend to do so, much against my will, but with the thought that I should meet his wishes," was my reply.

After this conversation with Swami Bodhananda and Surendra Bose, my Bengali friend and his other Bengali friends fell into a discussion among themselves as to whether it was right or wrong to send me back against my will, on the plea that I had

earned my livelihood as a servant. In this discussion Surendra Bose and his friends took the position that it was not lowering for a Brahman woman to work in a non-Hindu home as a servant. If we sons of Brahmans on occasions work in the homes of non-Hindus, what objection is there if our sister follows our example? And that opinion seemed to prevail. Surendra Bose called me aside, and said to me, "If you wish to remain say so and I will aid you, though against the wish of my friend." I replied that I did not wish to create enmity between friends, and that as I had promised to go I had decided to go.

While this discussion was going on as to the right or wrong of sending me back to my homeland against my will, Surendra Bose sent for Dr. Hardikar, because I was from the Maratha country, as he also was. I was much concerned as to how he was going to free me from the promise made to my Bengali friend, but my hopes began to rise. After listening to what they had to say of me, Dr. Hardikar replied, "I am ready to assume all the responsibility connected with Parvatibai and I ask you to put her in my charge." Swami Bodhananda and Surendra Bose placed me in charge of Dr. Hardikar, and sought to persuade my Bengali friend not to send me back against my wish. My Bengali friend had not taken much part in the discussion that was going on, and when he saw that Dr. Hardikar's intervention was going to make great trouble, he said, "Parvatibai

is breaking her promise to me, and I will not place her in your charge without the permission of Professor Gokhale." And with this he refused to give me in charge of Dr. Hardikar. Dr. Hardikar immediately called up Professor Gokhale by telephone at Schenectady and held a conversation with him. My Fate now depended on what Professor Gokhale would say, and the fifteen or twenty minutes of the conversation were moments of great concern to me. His reply was, "Parvatibai is not a child. Do what she wishes." With this reply the darkness of despair that surrounded me was pierced by a ray of hope, and my Bengali brother's castles in the air fell into ruins. I was now troubled as to how the money with which the ticket was bought was to be returned to Professor Gokhale who had provided it. But by the efforts of my new Bengali friends, the money was returned with the small loss of ten or twelve dollars, and I arranged the sending of it back to Professor Gokhale. I was at once greatly relieved.

In this emergency I was barely saved. I shall never forget the help given me by my Maharashtra brother Dr. Hardikar. I decided I would not return to Schenectady with my Bengali friend, but would remain in New York and with the aid of my new friends I would find employment and seek to carry out the purpose for which I had come to America. I heartily thanked my Bengali friends for their assistance and withdrew.

CHAPTER XXI

MY EXPERIENCES IN NEW YORK

WHILE I was living in New York Mr. Lala Rajpatrai and Dr. Hardikar were very busily engaged in the office of "Young India", conducting a propaganda in America in connection with Indian politics. "Young India" conducted a night school for teaching English to the Indians in New York. But as this school was far from the Y.W.C.A. where I was lodging, I was not able to gain much advantage from it.

On one occasion when I was in the office of the "Young India" Rajpatrai introduced me to a merchant by name of Thakkar, engaged in the importing and exporting trade, and recommended me to him with the request that he should give me employment in his family. Mr. Thakkar lived in Brooklyn. He had married a woman belonging to Iceland, and he had two very beautiful children. The elder was named Manu, and the younger Vikramaditya. I was given the work of cooking, bringing water and washing the soiled clothes of the children. His wife could speak six or seven languages. But because of her many duties and because of my house-

hold duties, she had no time to teach me English. I worked for them three weeks, but seeing I was gaining nothing in my purpose for being here, I came with a friend of theirs by name of Bagai, and sought for work in New York City.

In hunting for work I walked the streets looking for the sign of "Rooms to rent", and here I would press the button and when the landlady appeared I would put to her the double question of rent and employment. It is not advisable in America to ring the bell of a house, and then ask for work, so I would ring the bell and ask about the rent of the rooms, and then introduce the subject of employment. Following this method it happened one day that I pressed the button of a house with the sign of "Rooms to rent" and a Scottish lady came to the door. Her name was Mrs. Murray. Her husband worked on a farm in the suburbs. As Mrs. Murray wanted a servant, she engaged me on the spot. The house had 15 rooms and 18 lodgers. I obtained work there as a chamber maid.

In America families of small means rent a large house on a main street, and furnish the rooms with tables, chairs, beds, cupboards and so forth. On the beds there are mattresses, sheets and coverlids. The rooms are cared for by a housekeeper. A small room costs about 36 rupees a month. This includes the rent of the room, gas or electric lights, and the sweeping and other care of the room. Sometimes the roomers make a special arrangement to have

their breakfasts in the house, and pay an additional amount. Taking in lodgers in this way many Americans of the poorer classes earn their livelihood.

I was six weeks with this Scotch lady. Then because of her poverty she decided to do the necessary work herself. And again I had to seek for work. I never, however, left an old place until I found a new one. Wandering about one day, and seeing a sign of "Rooms to rent", I rang the bell of the front door. The landlady, an Irish woman, came to the door. As this interview had a comic side, I quote the conversation word for word.

I—Can I have a room here or get employment?

She—Are you a Gypsy?

I—No, I am not a Gypsy.

She—Then who are you? Indian or British?

I—I am an Indian, but a British Indian.

She—Then I have no room, and no work for you.

I—Why so?

She—The British are a very bad people.

I—Are all the British bad?

She—No, some are very good.

I—Who are they?

She—There is a Mr. Lalaji and a Dr. Hardikar, at 1400 Broadway. They are very nice people.

I—They and I are of the same nationality, and we are like relatives to one another.

She—If that is so, then consider this house as yours. Live here and work.

Accordingly I began my work for this Irish lady.

There were 18 roomers in the house, and she gave me 5 dollars a week. Her name was Mrs. Shehe. This woman's husband worked in a brewery, where he had to move barrels of liquor. Mrs. Shehe was very kind to me, and gave me milk, fruit, and bread and butter to eat. Although this Irish lady was in America, earning her livelihood, still she was very proud of her homeland, Ireland. In her sleeping room she had hung on the walls the photographs of those Irish leaders, who had put their lives in jeopardy to gain liberty for their land. The lodgers, according to the usual custom after their evening meal, at about eight o'clock, would leave the house for the Movies, Theatres, or for other gatherings. As the streets were all lighted with electric lights it was bright everywhere. The landlady would at such an hour take a tin box with a label on it, "Help Ireland to Independence", and would go on the prominent streets and bring back with her what would amount to 15 or 20 rupees. In her spare moments she read Irish newspapers and periodicals. This woman's education had not been beyond the primary grade. Seeing so poor and ignorant a woman and yet so patriotic, and so anxious for the welfare of her country, I could not but feel that a people who had such women were sure to gain their liberty. While in her house I obtained from her roomers 25 dollars for the Widows' Home in Poona, and thus made my first attempt while in America of seeking aid for the Poona Home. Encouraged by

Mr. Shehe I began to go to a night school to learn English. It was from here also that I went to the "Young India" office, and Dr. Hardikar introduced me to a Miss O'Reilly who lived in Brooklyn, and was a very broad minded lady. She said to Dr. Hardikar, "The International Conference of Industrial Workers is to be held in Washington, why do you not send Parvatibai there as a representative of Working Indian Women?" "We have no money for that," he replied. "Well, I will see what I can do," and with that she went on her way to Washington. At that time I had not even dreamed that I would ever go to Washington. I waited two weeks without hearing from Miss O'Reilly, and gave up hope of going there. But one morning, when in the midst of plans for obtaining employment elsewhere, a telephone message came to Mrs. Shehe for me, from the "Young India" office. It was in fact from Dr. Hardikar, telling me to start for Washington that very day at the invitation of Miss O'Reilly. She had telegraphed that she would provide for my ticket, and for my stay in Washington. She would meet me on the arrival of the train and take me to my lodgings. That very day Dr. Hardikar made all the necessary arrangements. He took me to the station and seated me in the train for Washington.

CHAPTER XXII

THE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' CONFERENCE AT WASHINGTON

AFTER the World War, among the many conferences that were held, was the International Workers' Conference, held at Washington in 1919. There were two divisions made, one that of men-workers, the other that of Women-workers. The representatives to this Conference from India were Mr. B. P. Wadia, and Mr. Malhar Narayan Joshi in the Men's Division. I was the sole representative for Indian female workers in America. There are Indian women in California, New York and in other States who along with their husbands are in the working class. Although they are few in number still they find many difficulties in their paths, and among them some unjust and oppressive laws.

Washington, the Capital of America, is about seven hours railway journey from New York. I arrived there at six in the evening. Miss O'Reilly, Miss O'Reilly's aged mother, and the friends of the O'Reillys, Mr. and Mrs. King, were at the station to welcome me. As I would have to remain five or six days for the Conference they had rented a room

for me. After a light supper at Mr. and Mrs. King's I retired for sleep in the room engaged for me.

The Conference lasted for five or six days. The sessions were from 9 to 12 in the forenoons and from 2 to 5 in the afternoons. In the Women's Division there were representatives from eighteen different nations. Each delegate read her speech in her own mother tongue and this was then translated. I therefore wrote out my speech in English, and was prepared to speak it in Marathi, and Miss O'Reilly had agreed to read the English translation. Miss O'Reilly was also ready with an address of her own in behalf of Irish working women, but the Reception Committee suddenly cancelled the addresses of the Irish and Indian delegates, to our great disappointment. By Miss O'Reilly's efforts my name appeared among the delegates, which I considered a no small honour.

The Conference passed the following resolutions:

1. Eight hours a day the limit for women.

2. The wages of women workers should be increased.

3. The homes of working women should be improved.

4. Employers should make provision for doctors and nurses for their women workers.

5. Night schools for women workers in the factories.

6. No child should be employed in a factory under

the age of fourteen. If children are employed for a short time the factory should see that they are properly fed.

7. The infants of working women should have proper provision made for them at the expense of the employers.

The Conference closed each day at five o'clock, and then Miss O'Reilly and her women friends would take a motor ride, visiting the various historical, industrial and educational institutions. On these daily excursions Miss O'Reilly never forgot to take me. So I, an unknown and a foreign woman, had the golden opportunity of seeing the sights of the Capital of America. I gained as much information as I could in visiting these various places. I was especially impressed by the noble Library building and the Mint. The Superintendent of the Mint gave a tea party to 500 of the women delegates from the different countries. That occasion gave the delegates opportunity to become acquainted with one another. We were shown how the American paper money was printed, and how the dollars were made, all of which was most interesting.

I received many benefits from going to this Conference. The chief benefit was the close friendship which took place between Miss O'Reilly and myself. Before the closing of the Conference Miss O'Reilly asked me whether I was able to get such employment as I wanted, and whether I was accomplishing the purposes for which I had come, such as the learn-

ing of English, and collecting money for the Widows' Home at Poona. I replied, "I have made many attempts, but I have not yet succeeded in working for an employer who would teach me English." Hearing my reply Miss O'Reilly conferred with her mother, and then decided to take me into her family. She said to me, "Will you go with my mother to Brooklyn?" I assented as I wanted work, and went with the mother to her residence in Brooklyn.

CHAPTER XXIII

MY LIFE IN THE O'REILLY HOME

I LIVED very happily with my new mistress, Miss O'Reilly and her mother, in their home in Brooklyn. In her youth Miss O'Reilly's mother had been a dressmaker. She married when about 27 or 28 years of age. She had one child born a year or two after the marriage, but soon after that her husband died. In her widowhood she took up again her former business, gave an education to her only child, and enabled her to graduate from a Technical school. It was this child who was now my mistress. At the time I went to work for this mother and daughter the mother was 81 years of age and the daughter 53. My mistress had never married. After graduating from the Technical School Miss O'Reilly opened a Trade School, conducting it according to her own special ideas. She carried on the school for fifteen years, and made it a great success. After that it was turned over to the State. In this school those industries are taught that are possible for women, and are taught in a practical manner. At present there are from a thousand to fifteen hundred girls in the school, learning the

different industries that are to provide them a livelihood. Among the subjects taught are millinery, dressmaking, knitting of sweaters, conducting of tea rooms, secretarial work, cooking, and the like. The girls choose their own subjects, and after perfecting their knowledge of these subjects they are sent out as graduates of this Trade School.

My mistress, Miss O'Reilly was, as I have said, the founder of this school, and had carried it on for many years. After giving up the school, she, and her mother in her old age, managed to live on their savings in a simple way.

Although Miss O'Reilly and her mother lived in a simple way, still the household arrangements were very neat and of a model kind, making it a delight to see them. Miss O'Reilly gave me a small room, and took it upon herself to beautifully decorate it. She would ask me whether I wanted this or that. I was thus able to have things arranged as if I were in my own home. Seeing my great desire to learn English she bought a Primer and started to teach me English every day.

In this new home, with only a mother and daughter, there was very little work to do, other than to sweep the rooms, prepare the breakfast, and other very simple things. And as this mother and daughter were 99 per cent vegetarians, I never felt any difficulty regarding my food. Thus through the grace of God I had now obtained a mistress such as I needed to make possible the purpose for which

I had come to America. Gradually I began to feel as though I belonged to the O'Reilly family, and my days there passed most happily. I lived with them for about a year and a quarter. During this period I was able to learn much and to see that for which I had come to America, and all this through the kindness and help of Miss O'Reilly, which I do not know how I can ever repay. In the same proportion of suffering and pain that I had thus far gone through, God now gave me the protection of Miss O'Reilly and let me see happy days. I cannot close this chapter without acquainting the reader in a small way with her manner of life, worthy of imitation and inspiring.

Although Miss O'Reilly was an American citizen, her forebears were Irish and she felt very proud of Ireland. She laboured in America, body and soul, for the freedom of her motherland. Miss O'Reilly's other chosen work was that of reforming the condition of men and women industrial workers of America. All world problems seemed to her inferior to these two, the freedom of Ireland and the betterment of the industrial worker's condition. The evidence of her sympathy for India was the priceless assistance she gave me. Love of mankind, and devotion to the service of mankind, was her religion. Miss O'Reilly was very liberal minded. She was not only opposed to class distinctions, but even to national distinctions, and held that international problems could not be settled without the

mutual aid of all nations. Although Miss O'Reilly's mother was 81 years of age, she used to spend eight hours each day in reading. And when her daughter returned from her outside errands she would throw herself on her bed for rest, while the mother read to her from books of various subjects. Miss O'Reilly was a great admirer of her mother, and with sincere devotion she made her bed and attended to her other needs. At breakfast Miss O'Reilly would discuss with her mother the special news found in the morning daily papers. As I listened to this discussion I was able to gain a good idea of the news of the day, without having to read the papers myself. From her childhood Miss O'Reilly had put aside the inducements to marriage, and had devoted her life to the uplift of the working classes. She was always caring for orphan children. I never saw her unhappy because she had not been married. In our country widows, whose husbands died when they were of a very tender age, always look sad, and so do the guardians and relatives of those girls, who for some reason or another are unable to give them in marriage. But in America, when for any reason a girl does not marry, or if she is widowed, she does not give in to despondency and become helpless, as do the women and their relatives in India, but they face the situation, and take up duties as citizens of their country. This is a most valuable example for all of us to follow. If I see in Miss O'Reilly an example of a liberal mind and

efficient womanhood, and if I have had awakened in me a sincere devotion, that has been constantly growing, until she now seems to me like a divinity, there is no reason why anyone should be surprised.

Miss O'Reilly taught me to read and speak English for seven or eight months only. Because of her activities she finally found no time to teach me, but I was now constantly meeting with people, men and women, and learning English by the direct method. My days at Miss O'Reilly's were spent as follows. The mornings were spent in household duties. In the afternoons I used to go and call on ladies whose acquaintance I had made, or go to gatherings of various kinds in New York City. Through my having attended the Industrial Conference in Washington my name had become familiar to the leaders in social and educational work in New York. I was therefore invited to dinners at clubs and to other gatherings, and to afternoon teas. I saw my opportunity in these gatherings and used to attend them. If the possibility occurred, I would on such occasions work for the Widows' Home in India. I was here enabled to see the method by which American women carried on social enterprises. It gave me the opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with some of New York's wealthy and leading women. And in various ways I saw the advantage to myself. As Miss O'Reilly was a recognized leader in behalf of Industrial workers, if she was invited anywhere, she would if possible take

me along with her, and introduce me to others. Sometimes Miss O'Reilly would invite friends to tea, which gave her the pretext for making them acquainted with me. The Indian students in New York also invited me to their homes, and introduced me to others. In this way I was enabled to make close observation of the social conditions of New York City and its suburbs. And in the meanwhile going hither and thither I secured 3000 rupees for the Widows' Home.

In America, the various conferences and unions are accustomed to hold their business meetings before the dinner, and listen to speeches during the dinner. On one occasion I gave a short address at the dinner of the Sorosis Club with its 500 members present, in the world-famed Hotel, The Waldorf Astoria. I spoke to them of Professor Karve's attempts in the line of female education, and I described to them the institution at Hingane. The Sorosis Club is composed of those women only who are independently earning their own livelihood. It was founded long ago. Its reputation is very high. Americans consider it a great honor to be asked to speak before this Club.

Once when speaking before a gathering of ladies with the purpose of obtaining help for Professor Karve's Home for Widows, I happened to tell them of the weariness that often befell Professor Karve because he had to walk long distances. After my talk I was asked by a lady why Professor Karve did not

use an automobile. I told her that it was because of poverty that he could not purchase one. Another one asked me whether Professor Karve would accept a motor if donated to him. I naturally replied that he would. I soon forgot these questions and answers, but the ladies who had been present made an effort, and secured a fund that resulted in a donation of a motor to Professor Karve's work. That motor is now being used for carrying back and forth the professors in the Girls College at Yerandavan.

With these opportunities of speaking before various Clubs in New York, I was able to describe to them Professor Karve's University for Women, and make an effort to raise money for its support. At this juncture some pamphlets arrived at the office of "Young India" for distribution, written by Mahatma Gandhi on "Non-Coöperation". I gave one to Miss O'Reilly to read, that she might understand the nature of the unrest in India. Having read this pamphlet it came into her mind that just as India was attempting to boycott English cloth, so the Irish in America should boycott the tea that came from England, and in that way help Ireland. The very next day Miss O'Reilly called together a gathering of Irish and gave a lecture on "Boycotting Tea". The result was a fund for the purchase of Java and Sumatra tea, and tea from countries other than England, and a resolution to encourage the use of this tea, and to donate any profits to the help of Ire-

land's liberty. Miss O'Reilly purchased tea from other than English sources and saw to its sale herself. In order to spread this boycott of English tea she called various gatherings, and persuaded her Irish friends to use Dutch tea. By this means many families in New York began using Dutch tea instead of English, and the profits accruing from this boycott, amounting to about a thousand dollars she sent to the aid of Ireland.

I would gladly have spent the remaining days of my life in the O'Reilly's pure and happy home, and Miss O'Reilly was anxious that I should remain permanently with them. But my duty to India drew me, and after having spent a year and a quarter in the O'Reilly home, I felt I should go back to India. I was also getting on in years. And because of the intense cold in America I began to feel somewhat rheumatic. Moreover, as I had already received a letter from Professor Karve regarding my return to India, I began to feel I should not lose the opportunity of seeing my friends and relatives again while hands and feet were active, and I desired to spend the rest of my life in the service of India's widows. So with these two thoughts in mind, one a personal one, the other with a religious purpose, I decided to return to India. Miss O'Reilly helped me in the preparation for the voyage, such as I needed. Both she and her mother felt very badly at the thought of my going. When it was known that I was going, my Indian friends in New York, Mrs. Shehe and

others gave tea parties in my honour, and bade me an affectionate farewell. And knowing that I would not again be able to visit my American friends, I bade them an affectionate farewell.

On the 20th of April, 1920, I was to sail by the White Star *Olympic*. Among those who came to the pier to see me off were Miss O'Reilly, Mrs. Shehe, Indian students, and Americans of my acquaintance. Some brought me flowers, others books, candy, and fruit, and such other things that would be useful on the voyage. As they waved their handkerchiefs and hands in their affectionate farewell, and as I felt the love of my Indian brothers in America, my tears began to flow, and I exclaimed, "O God, how can I ever repay them for their kindness to me." Thus praying to the Merciful Ruler of the world, I made my last bow to the shore of that land that had been the object of my contemplation, and when I could no longer see those who had come to see me off, I went down into my cabin, and engaged my thoughts in the arranging of my things.

CHAPTER XXIV

BACK IN MY MOTHER-LAND

THE White Star S.S. *Olympic* is a very large steamer, and all its arrangements are perfect. I had now become accustomed to ocean travel, and from experience I had learned what things were of special importance, and to be cared for. So that the voyage back to my native land was full of interest, and most delightful all the way.

I was travelling in the Second Class, and I had as my cabin companion a Dr. Bahadurji, a Parsee lady. Her companionship made the voyage delightful. On this steamer also I had to be content with bread and butter, fruit and rice. But as I had become accustomed to this diet, it did not trouble me as it had done on my first voyage. After seven or eight days our steamer reached Liverpool. In the boat-train I came with Dr. Bahadurji to London, and put up at the Hindu Hostel. In this hostel I met a former pupil of our Widows' Home, Miss Dvaraka Bhalchandra, and she was of extreme help to me. My intention was, if I found it convenient, to remain in London for a time, see the noteworthy sights, and if possible to do something for the Widows' Home.

But as compared with life in America I experienced many inconveniences during my short stay in England. The rent of rooms was higher than in America and the arrangements less comfortable. I was planning therefore to leave when a letter of one of my Indian friends in America to a Panjabi barrister friend of his in London proved useful in enabling me to remain longer. This Panjabi barrister friend engaged a room for me near to a hostel for *Shikhs* and *Shikh* students, called the Bhupendranath Hostel. At that time the miners strike was on, and it was very difficult to obtain coal, and as the heat in my room was insufficient, I suffered at night from the cold. I remained however five weeks in that room. I spent the afternoons in visiting friends, and returned in the evening to my room for the night.

While in London I gave a lecture at the residence of an Indian student called the Shakespear Hut, my subject being the Widows' Home. As a result I collected 20 pounds. I met here Mr. Polak, a close friend of Professor Karve's and one who has great sympathy for India. I also met Saint Nihalsingh. Through the Panjabi barrister I was enabled to go through the British Museum and Buckingham Palace.

From London I went to Paris. I telegraphed to a Gujarati pearl merchant in Paris of the train in which I was coming. While in America he had invited me to come to him. This merchant met me at

the station and took me to his home. I did not suffer discomforts in Paris as I did in London. I lived five weeks with this family.

While in Paris I saw a model primary girls school, and also a boarding school for girls. With my friend's help I met many of the distinguished people in Paris. The French are very sympathetic towards India, and I found through their acquaintance that they are ready to help India. At that time, at my request, an Association was formed, called La Association des Hindu de Paris, 23 La Lamartine, for the purpose of assisting Hindu women travellers coming to Paris. The Secretary of the Association is at present the granddaughter of the Late Dadabhai Noroji, Miss Noroji. It was my intention to obtain help for the Widows' Home from the merchants of Paris, but just at that time Sir Ravindranath Tagore was to pass through Paris on his way to India, and a large sum was being raised with which to welcome him, so that I had to give up my plan.

In the company of Ravindranath Tagore and his daughter-in-law, I sailed for Bombay from Marseilles by Second Class P. and O. on the 2nd of July, 1920. I had a Panjabi lady as my cabin companion. There were 25 Indian students on the boat. Ravindra Babu used to discuss poetry with these students to the delight of all. Sometimes we spent hours in the bright moonlight listening to the nectar words of Ravindranath Tagore. I shall never forget those nights and those occasions. Thus I, in

the company of Ravindranath Tagore, arrived in Bombay on the 15th of July, 1920. Two or three days after landing in Bombay I came back to Hingane to continue my work for the Widows' Home and School.

CHAPTER XXV

MY OPINION ON SOCIAL QUESTIONS

LEADERS of thought in India, both men and women, have from time to time given to the public their opinions on social questions. Social Reformers have given expression to their thoughts in resolutions passed at their Conferences. I have no book-knowledge as others have, and I have no University degrees. I feel therefore that I have not sufficient knowledge to write on this subject. Yet, as I have had to travel for many years in the interests of the Widows' Home, I have observed many things connected with the social life of our people. On account of my visit to America and Europe, I feel also able to make some comparisons between the social life here and the social life there. By the aid of the experience I have gained, an experience that not all have had, I intend, therefore, to put my opinions before the reader. I trust this will be of some assistance to those who are thinking of these questions.

The life of women is in two forms. There are bound to be more married women than unmarried. Men have to work outside of the home to procure

the money necessary for the running of the home, and the women have to remain in the home for its protection. On account of the present increase in the expense of living, men have to work harder than formerly, and so even more of their time is spent outside of the home. Men in business are now less able to command their own time, and that means that they are less at home. Under these conditions all the burden of the home and the care of the children fall on the women.

In our homes there is not as much effort as there should be to teach the children what in English is called "good manners". Our men have little connection with their homes other than to bring their money to it. They have no special relations with their servants or children. So that the responsibility for the right conduct of the family, and for their right manners falls now on the women. As women, therefore, are the mothers-to-be of this country it is necessary to give them an education suited to their special domestic life. Such an education should include the first principles in medical care, care of children, cooking, care of a garden, how to keep a house clean, the purchase and care of food, singing, and religious and moral instruction, and such like important subjects.

At present educated girls are receiving the same education as boys. This education is of no use whatever in their domestic life. I do not see that the domestic life of our educated women is any bet-

ter than the domestic life of our uneducated women. But the tendency still exists of giving our girls the same education as is given to boys. This tendency should be checked at once.

In some families it would appear that clever servants dominate over their mistresses. In such homes children show no respect to their mothers. In my home in the Konkan, where the old customs prevailed, there was no such disrespect shown. I see in our present homes children replying disrespectfully to their mothers, and making all the noise they want. They spend all their time in play. I do not mean of course that children should be made to sit in corners like dolls. But study and play should be regulated. At the same time, the mother must be patient with them. Thus if the mother brings into the home regularity of habits, and polite manners, servants and children will follow her example.

The home is a school. The mistress and the master are the principle teachers in this school. It is they who have to give servants and children a knowledge of what the home life should be. If these teachers throw aside their dignified position and cease to teach their servants and children, that home is sure to be the scene of wild strife. I have seen such wild strifes in some homes. Fifty years ago we were taught in our homes tidy habits, but I see very little of that in our modern homes.

Our former methods in our family life seem to be scattering to the winds. Formerly there were large

families, but now the king, the queen and the crown prince seem to be all that is wanted. In the social life of the West, family life seems almost extinct, and the population of the hotels is on the increase. Unmarried women are exceeding the married in numbers. Are we going to learn a lesson from this condition in the West, or are we going to follow it? At present our social life is a curious one.

As the climate of our country is warm, and everywhere there is ignorance of the laws of health, together with the poverty of our people, if the ways of Europeans are copied in their mode of life, I think it will be to the injury of our land. Instead of copying the good points in European homes, that of cleanliness, neatness, home-teaching, dignity and the like, we seem to be copying only the outer fashions.

As religion is not being taught in the homes, neither in its old form nor in its modern form, neither the moral life of our families nor their high spirituality are growing as they should. Of course some excellent and model families are to be found. But aside from these one finds the families living half like Europeans and half like Hindus. Under these conditions it is a matter of much concern what is to happen to our family institution. Women in Europe aside from their family duties engage in various social activities, for example, writing articles for newspapers, going to gatherings, giving lectures, working for child-welfare, developing con-

ditions of healthy living in their cities, and planning for the removal of disabilities under which women may suffer, and such like interests.

In our country this work falls on the educated unmarried women and widows. But if the married women would share in this work, it would be an encouragement for the men of the family to do the same, and the result would be a happy one. Married women in this country for one reason or another are always complaining to their husbands. So the educated husband and the sons spend their spare time at a club instead of at home. The midday tea they prefer to take at some other place rather than at home, even though their homes may be near. In many places one sees that the home is to the men merely a place to eat. Men should feel an attraction for their homes as they do in the West. Let all question themselves as to whether they feel that way toward their homes.

Our children and the man of the house must consider the home as his place of joy and comfort. And that this may be so must come from the efforts of the women. Every mistress of a home should know how to beautify the home, and how to make the home more healthy. To this end there should be instruction given in all girls' schools on the management of the home.

I do not see in the women of our land an increase in the sense of beauty, as there should be. In this our women can learn much from the women of the

West. In the West the bride and the bridegroom take as much pains with their clothes and other adornments five or ten years after marriage as they do the first few days after marriage. The wife feels she should look well, and dress neatly, so as to keep her husband's mind drawn to her. And the husband is no less careful to hold his wife's affection long after marriage, than he was to draw her affection before marriage. We see just the opposite here. The mistress of the house dresses most shabbily. If an occasion arises for a short sermon to them on neatness of dress they reply, "Why should I care how I look? Is there any thing I want to go and see, or is there any one coming? I have seen all there is to see." Neither husband nor wife take the same interest they took at the time of their marriage, and the gay display of their processions. When reproached, their answer is, "What is the use now? The marriage has taken place." I can truly say that if wives gave thought to personal beauty and care in their dress, husbands would be pleased. If husbands also after marriage would try to please their wives, they would have a greater hold on their affection. In the West there is much that husbands and wives here might follow. Married life would be fuller of love and joy, and the world would be happier.

Western women make the most strenuous efforts to keep their houses clean. The arrangements are for peace and comfort. The very opposite of this

is often to be found in India, even in the homes of the rich, where in various corners are to be found the dirt of many years, cob webs, and old tea leaves. In very few places are the window-panes ever washed, or the woodwork of the house wiped. In some cases food is not properly covered, resulting in unsanitary conditions.

What a difference there is between the lavatory of the West and our own. Great pains are taken in the West to keep the lavatory clean. But with us may be witnessed ends of cigarettes and clogged sewerage, and other nauseating conditions. I personally take great pains to have the lavatory of the Widows' Home properly constructed and clean. Many a time I have with my own hands cleaned the lavatory of the Institution. I wish others would learn the lesson from my experience. The first thing I did after returning from America, and taking up my work at Hingane was to see that the lavatories were clean. Seeing my example some of the pupils came and gave me their voluntary help.

The reason for speaking of such things here is that if we cannot keep our lavatories clean, how are we going to keep our homes clean? True sentiment regarding filth, is not that working in filth for its removal is degrading, but the being willing to live in it is degrading. A right idea in this regard will help us in all sanitary measures. The intelligence which is put into such matters in America is not seen here.

CHAPTER XXVI

OUR MARRIAGE CUSTOMS AND THOSE OF THE WEST

OUR marriage customs have been brought into existence for the permanence and wellbeing of our social life. No marriage system can be absolutely faultless. The system that leads to more married women than unmarried must be given the preference. Because of poverty it may be, or because of education, our former system of child-marriage is disappearing, and adult marriages are now beginning to prevail. But it is very important to determine the proper age for adult marriages. If nothing is settled on this point then the marriage of old men with young girls is possible. The girl's age should be from 16 to 20 and the boy's age 25 to 30. In conformity with this parents should choose the proper mates for their children. Marriage should not be long delayed after the choice is made. Marriage should not be put off to some future time, for that means that our girls and boys must live in an unmarried state, with all its resulting evils. For the happiness of the homelife, marriages should take place within the limits mentioned above.

Our boys and girls should not sacrifice themselves

to the seduction of independence, but should trust the wisdom of those who have given them birth and early instruction, and in that trust find their happiness. Guardians should give to their children the advantage of their own experience. If too much attention is given to appearance, rank, and wealth, it will mean that many will remain unmarried. Between our former child-marriage system and the Western system, where love determines the choice, there is a middle method which is better for us. In Japan this middle method is being approved. Young men should not delay their marriage on the plea that they wish for more money to spend on their marriage festivities. Our girls must not make an unchangeable vow to remain unmarried all their lives. All girls cannot marry those who are in the higher ranks of the Indian Civil Service. When guardians find an excellent opportunity for the marriage of their girls, it is wrong for them to refuse on the plea that they have to pass certain examinations. Nor would they be following the right principles of life if they determined to remain single rather than marry a widower with children. No life is complete without marriage. The advantage of female education must show itself in the reformation of the home, if it is to be of any advantage to our country. And if education means the unmarried state, our girls are taking a very great responsibility. Guardians must not think it a matter of praise that their girls remain unmarried for the sake of employment.

Marriage is also a way to economy. Of wealthy marriages one may see only three or four in a hundred thousand. Without economy marriages will not be happy. This should be brought to the attention of our boys and girls. Guardians must impress on the young also that the unmarried life is more expensive than the married life, and more replete with difficulties. It will not be useful for us to adopt the ways of the West, where marriage may be temporary, and depending on contract. The sense of duty and self-renunciation must be the foundation of marriage if it is to remain permanent, and useful for our country and posterity.

CHAPTER XXVII

WOMEN'S INSTITUTIONS

IN our country today there are many institutions, political, industrial and the like. Among these social institutions may be included those concerned with female education. But the difference is this that public attention is given to the political and other institutions, and not to female education. This is a matter for deep regret. Indeed if any pupil connected with this Institution for Widows or a teacher is married, then from many directions there come nasty criticisms.

As a matter of fact the Institutions in this Maharashtra for the education of women are not private but belong to the public, and are managed by those appointed by the public. People should become members of these Institutions and send their delegates to form the managing committees. This the public does not do as it should. If there was more confidence in those who manage the institutions, it would be easier to show better results.

People expect that these institutions for female education will produce girls of noble character,

patriotic, and polished in manners. Hence teachers in these institutions must always bear in mind their responsibility in this regard. In India people look more especially to the character of their girls than they do to that of their boys. Our girls in Colleges and High Schools must give especial attention to the development of character, and with a little more humility. Our girls must learn to dress and behave in a way that will not call for blame. They must learn politeness, and cultivated ways. Teachers, whether married or unmarried, should regulate their relations with their pupils impartially, otherwise, if there is the least partiality there will be misunderstandings in the classes as well as from outside.

In connection with the educational institutions for women the question often arises of the number of men and women teachers. Why are not women teachers only chosen? My answer, as I look at the question, is that there are very few women who have obtained their B.A. or M.A. degrees, and if they desire employment, they prefer to work under the Government, because of the larger salary that is given in Government institutions. Women of the wealthy classes, and those with high education, have not turned their attention as they should to places where the emolument is small. On account of this difficulty men teachers and professors have to be appointed instead of women. But a certain amount of inferiority attaches itself to them because after they have worked for ten or twelve years, and a

suitable female teacher is found, they are turned adrift.

I do not think that the public is as favorably inclined to the idea of male teachers in female schools as they should be. This being so, male teachers and superintendents must be very careful regarding their conduct. What such conduct should be has been well illustrated in the case of Professor Karve, and his management of the Widows' Home and School and if all my brethren will bear this in mind it will be well.

Women teachers have a heavier responsibility than men teachers, because girls more readily follow the example of women teachers than of men. They must conduct themselves with dignity, and see that their manners are those of cultivated people.

CHAPTER XXVIII

PROGRESS IN THE ELEVATION OF INDIA'S WOMEN

FROM many points of view the state of Indian women is deplorable, and social reformers are steadily working for reform. Even in Europe efforts to secure to women their freedom have existed only in the last two or three centuries. European women have now received their freedom in material things, but they are not yet entirely free from servitude. If freedom from servitude is meant freedom from men and a life of independence from them, then that freedom is unnatural, impossible, disastrous, and opposed to the laws of right living.

In India there are certain legal rights that women have yet to obtain. Of this there is no question. But their freedom from suffering can best be accomplished by coöperating with men. In order to escape servitude to their husbands, they must not accept the servitude of outside employment. Our sisters in this country must learn a lesson from the sorrowful condition of European women who have obtained their material liberty. My humble request is that our ideas of women's freedom should be

thought out. If men have been unjust to women there is no reason why there should not be an agitation to remove the injustice. As illustrations of the results of agitation by Reformers there have been laws passed, such as prohibiting the burning of widows, allowing widow remarriage, laws on the age of consent and the like. There are other laws that should be passed. But in this agitation for women's rights the example of Europe should not be followed. In Europe there is now a strife between men and women. Women have entered into all the occupations of men, and at times made themselves strangers to the home, the sacred place for their duties. We do not want such conditions in India.

In India every woman must place before her mind the ideal of being the best sister, the best mother, and the best wife. And female education should be in accordance with this ideal. There is an agitation in Europe that in the education of men and women a difference should be made based on difference of characteristics and differences of duty and differences in the place for the discharge of duties. A complaint is already heard that the education given does not prove itself as useful as it should be. But the Western women who have married and are carrying on their homes may well be copied by our women in the management of their homes.

If in India no difference is made in the education of girls and boys, founded on differences of duties and place, evil will result as it does in Europe. We

are seeing this take place in some of our highly educated families. The time is come for us to watch our steps and follow Japan in the matter of female education.

Professor Karve has founded the Indian Womens' University in order that Indian women may become good mothers and home makers. This agitation has come at a very opportune time. One is only sorry that educated people do not give as much attention to it as they should. Poor people, whom the education of others has driven into idleness, seeing the evidence before their eyes, send their girls or women to the college seduced by the thought that through their future employment it will be to their gain. Thus girls who may wish to be married are encouraged rather to take up outside employment, to the loss of the riches of a domestic life, to say nothing of the loss of the supreme-spiritual-riches. For women there is greater servitude in outside employment than there is in the married life. There is no reason why women should not choose the servitude of love to that of money. The idea of obtaining material gain is a very much lower ideal than that of becoming a good mother and a good mistress of the home.

Women should engage in some home industry. A woman when married is not hindered from being a nurse, a doctor, or a teacher. On the contrary, I think she can take up such duties with greater happiness to herself. In the villages, and even in the

cities, the condition of married educated women is a very much happier one than that of unmarried educated women. An unmarried woman has to protect herself from insults, jibes and envy, and the easy way out of it is to get married. If, however, an unmarried woman wishes to remain so, working for society, let her remain under the protection of relatives, while doing her work faithfully.

In order to bring about a permanence in the existence of women's universities there are many steps yet to be taken. Every year the All India Women's Conference passes the resolution that the education of women should be different from that given to men. From this will be seen in what direction our thoughts are inclining. Bringing permanency to the idea of women's universities is going to be the lasting memorial to Professor Karve. My great wish is that all my brethren and sisters may unite in a strenuous effort to create a national movement in behalf of female education.

A Hindu Widow Tells Her Story

NYTimes May 18 1930

MY STORY: The Autobiography of a Hindu Widow. By Mrs. Parvati Athavale. Translated from the Marathi language, with an introduction, by the Rev. Justin E. Abbott. Illustrated. 149 pp. *New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.* $2.50.

THE simplicity, directness and sincerity of this little life story give it a charm of its own that much enhances the interest of the author's account of her devotion to a purpose that for many years has absorbed all her time, her strength and her thought. That purpose has been amelioration of the life and status of that sad section of the population of India, the young widows. She was married at the age of 11 and became a widow at 20, after she had borne three children, of whom only one survived. An older sister, after a good many years of widowhood—she had been widowed at 9—made a second marriage, becoming the wife of Professor Karve, a Brahman of rather advanced social views, who a little later established at Poona a Home for Widows. The author was originally so conservative that she was shocked even by remarriage and did not approve of her brother-in-law's enterprise. But her ideas gradually became more modern and after a few years she went to Poona to study and work and finally to teach in this home. Seeing how much the child-widows who went to it were benefited she became its enthusiastic advocate and ever since has devoted all her energies to its support. The chief part of her work has been the collection of funds to keep it going. On this mission, and partly also because she wanted to learn English and see America, she came to this country during the World War and stayed here almost two years. To her experiences in the United States she devotes almost half the book. It is an amazing narrative of such singleness of heart and utter absorption in her purpose as counted no sacrifice worth considering if thereby she could advance her aim by an iota. She worked as housemaid, suffered hardships, did anything that came her way and tried always and everywhere to make known the good work the Widow's Home at Poona was doing and to inspire interest in its purpose.

It is a naive, self-revelatory narrative and by reading it one comes to a better understanding of racial characteristics that underlie the movement Mahatma Gandhi has inspired and developed—and also of his character and of the influence upon him of the ideal and the purpose he has set himself to win.

Herald-Tribune
BOOKS, SUNDAY, JUNE 29, 1930

Hindu Widow

MY STORY.
By Mrs. Parvati Athavale . . .
Translated by the Rev. Justin
E. Abbott, D.D. . . . *New York:*
G. P. Putnam's Sons . . . $2.50.

Reviewed by
W. NORMAN BROWN

PARVATI ATHAVALE is a Hindu widow who has escaped the traditional bondage of her lot. She wrote her book in her native Marathi for an Indian audience, hoping to win aid for the school for widows and orphan girls where she works in Poona, and it is only by chance that her story is offered to Western ears. Hers is the voice of reform speaking to India itself, unconscious of listening [illegible]

child, was married again. The father and the eldest son of the family gave their consent and assistance. The significance of this act could scarcely be appreciated outside of India. It was as scandalous as though an Evangelical minister in a small town in Tennessee were knowingly, deliberately and publicly to marry his daughter into bigamy. The first effect was that the family was boycotted for more than a year by the entire village.

The sister's husband was Professor Karve, who, with no funds but what he could beg, had established a small home and school for widows in Poona. He and the sister wished to give Parvatibai an education, but she was conservative and held back. But after a year, when she was twenty-six, she

120 HOBART AVENUE
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Feb. 22nd 1930

Dear Mr Blossom

Those accented letters were